The

METAMORPHOSIS OF PHILOSOPHY

by

JOHN OULTON WISDOM

Ph. D., University of Dublin (Trinity College),
Assistant Professor of Philosophy at
Farouk I University, Alexandria

PREFACE

The sections of this book dealing with metaphysics and logical analysis have formed the basis of part of a course on contemporary philosophy given to final year students of philosophy at Farouk I University. Some of the matter of a paper entitled "Positivism", which appeared in *Mind* (N.S. Vol. LIV, No. 213, London, 1945), has been utilised and I wish to thank the Editor for permission to do this. A Public Lecture entitled "The Significance of Psycho-Analysis for Philosophy", given at the same University on May 8, 1946, is embodied in Part III.

Since this book has its roots in work done several years ago, I wish to acknowledge my deep debt to Mr. F. La T. Godfrey F.T.C.D. for his never failing encouragement and kindness, which was more than can be readily put into words, and to the late Professor Henry S. Macran F.T.C.D., whose lectures aroused in me the greatest interest in philosophy. Macran's lectures have impressed themselves indelibly on the minds of generations of students at Trinity College, Dublin, by his deep appreciation for his subject and by his power of unveiling the essence of speculative mysteries. Though I do not identify myself with his point of view and my psychological hypothesis would have been unacceptable to him, it is an attempt to follow his practice of looking at things as a whole. To Professor G. E. Moore, of Trinity College, Cambridge, I must record my gratitude for the patience with which he explained the intricacies of logical analysis to me and, for the number of hours he sacrificed in this way; I hope I have not grossly misrepresented his views and ways of putting things Chapter III and part of Chapter IV have their source in his Tripos lectures for 1933; adequate references for them in prin-

ted works cannot be given. Though I do not identify my-self with his point of view either, I am deeply aware of the unrivalled value of logical analysis as a training for unravel-ling telescoped concepts. After studying under Macran or under Moore, one's perspective is so coloured that it is im-possible to look at things as one had before. To Dr. Ernest Jones, President of the International Psycho-Analytical As-sociation, I owe a special debt : he enabled me to grasp some-thing of the intricacy and importance of unconscious mental activity; and to develop the standpoint that forms the keynote of this book. As regards the manuscript, Professor Price, of New College, Oxford, at what must have been immense labour, commented in detail upon the style and matter of the book; it has been considerably rearranged since then, gaining much from his suggestions. Dr. Joan Wynn Reeves has been good enough to make a number of comments that have enabled me to improve the English and the logic of certain chapters. Naturally I alone am responsible for the form the book takes.

I wish to thank Mr. Gwyn Williams and Professor K. N. Colvile for helping with proof correcting.

Farouk I University,   J. O. WISDOM
Alexandria.

June, 1946.

CONTENTS

"Man is the measure of all things".   Protagoras.

"Supposing that Truth is a woman—what then ? ... Certainly she has never allowed herself to be won ... But to speak seriously, there are good grounds for hoping that all dogmatising in philosophy ... may have been only a noble puerilism and tyronism; — and probably the time is at hand when it will be once and again understood what has actually sufficed for the basis of such imposing and absolute philosophical edifices as the dogmatists have hitherto reared : ... perhaps some play upon words, a deception on the part of grammar, or an audacious generalisation of very restricted, very personal, very human-all-too-human facts ...

Having kept a sharp eye on philosophers, and having read between their lines long enough, I now say to myself that the greater part of conscious thinking must be counted amongst the instinctive functions, and it is so even in the case of philosophical thinking : ... As little as the act of birth comes into consideration in the whole process and procedure of heredity, just as little is "being-conscious" opposed to the instinctive in any decisive sense; the greater part of the conscious thinking of a philosopher is secretly influenced by his instincts, and forced into definite channels. And behind all logic and its seeming sovereignty of movement, there are valuations, or to speak more plainly, physiological demands, for the maintenance of a definite mode of life ...

It has gradually become clear to me what every great philosophy up till now has consisted of — namely, the confession of its originator, and a species of involuntary and unconscious auto-biography; and moreover that the moral (or immoral) purpose in every philosophy has constituted the true vital germ out of which the entire plant has always grown ...

In the philosopher ... there is absolutely nothing impersonal; and above all, his morality furnishes a decided and decisive testimony as to who he is,— that is to say, in what order the deepest impulses of his nature stand to each other." -- Nietzsche.

"And so a rich store of ideas is formed, born of the need to make tolerable the helplessness of man, and built out of the material offered by memories of the helplessness of his own childhood and the childhood of the human race." — Freud.

N. B. In order to distract the reader's eye as little as possible, footnotes merely containing references are indicated by numerals, while those containing comment are distinguished by an asterisk or other sign.

CHAPTER I.

Introduction

Psycho-analysis has been applied with striking success to the understanding of dreams, myths, folk-lore, biography, literature, art, and so on—all of them spheres where deep feeling, refined or crude, is given play. It would not be surprising if philosophy, too, contained emotional depths not hitherto suspected; and this I have tried to show in the case of Schopenhauer[1]. According to the analysis of his life proposed, his most intellectual principle of the Will and the Arche type (*Idee*) sprang endopsychically from a mental conflict present from early childhood and served as a medium in which the conflict could clothe itself without inflicting unendurable distress. Apart from the validity of this, the very possibility of such a kind of analysis strongly points to the need to revise our conception of philosophy, in the light of the knowledge of the human mind that psycho-analysis now gives us. Such reorientation forms the theme of the present book.

Philosophy is thus to be approached in the same way as other material in the field of anthropology. But, though this conception can be apprehended by anyone with proper knowledge of psycho-analysis or with the insight of a Nietzsche, it is not developed till Part III. First is given a brief discussion of the nature of speculative philosophy, which denotes nearly all of the subject up to the end of the last century. Since

---

(1) J. O. Wisdom, "The Unconscious Origin of Schopenhauer's Philosophy", *The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, Vol. XXVI. Nos. 1 & 2, London, 1945.

then has grown up a new approach to the subject—logical analysis . As a body of thought, this still exists for the most part in the pages of journals, but, because it is not the product of one man only, there is no book giving a "system" of logical analysis.[1] It is therefore necessary to expound it or its chief forms, and Part II contains what I hope is an adequate account of it, though it is not exhaustive . By this means the position of philosophy is assessed, and by this route, perhaps, the professional philosopher may be led to the hypotheses then presented in Part III.

Logical analysis arose about the beginning of the present century—perhaps, so far as one can date anything of this kind, with Professor G. E. Moore's paper entitled the "Refutation of Idealism" published in 1903.[2] In one form or another, logical analysis has had an enormous influence upon philosophical thought in most countries where philosophy is active. Its intrinsic importance is very generally that it has so altered the perspective of metaphysics that one finds it difficult to imagine philosophical discussions of any cogency taking place unless they take account of logical analysis, even though this method may have grave defects; more particularly, it constitutes an unparalleled attack on speculation. Those that are familiar with logical analysis, in spite of its relative inaccessibility, will find nothing novel in Chapters III-VI, except perhaps for some of the treatment of Verification in Chapter V. The development of logical analysis given in Chapter X is fairly recent, and the criticisms of it put forward in Chapters VIII and IX are I believe new. Thus the first two Parts

---

(1) A good deal of information can be derived from two recent works : *The Philosophy of G. E. Moore*, Evanston and Chicago, 1942, and *The Philosophy of Bertrand Russell*, 1944, both edited by Schilpp.

(2) G. E. Moore, *Philosophical Studies*, London, 1922, Ch. I

contain exposition and criticism rather than original matter. Important applications of the method, *e.g.* in the field of perception, are not dealt with, since they do not bear upon the main theme of the book; the aim is to throw into sharp relief the position in which metaphysics finds itself as a result of logical analysis. Whether the method has such a devastating effect as would at first appear is debatable; and it throws no light on the meaning of metaphysics—for a certain meaning remains even if the logico-analytical attack is successful.

The need to view speculation from the standpoint of dynamic psychology can thus be seen to arise from the present position in philosophy, even if it did not arise from actual psychological study of metaphysics. To such empirical study Part III constitutes the theoretical counterpart; it is a hypothesis that may give a meaning to speculative philosophy, even though the meaning hitherto claimed be denied existence by logical analysis.

Part I

Speculative Philosophy

CHAPTER II.

The Nature of Speculative Philosophy.

A brief discussion of speculative philosophy*— which will sometimes be described simply as speculation or metaphysics — is required for the following reasons:— (1) In the current atmosphere — broadly speaking critical — speculative thought, although it has existed in fresh forms all through the ages, is now seldom pursued from its own standpoint; attempts are made to treat it as if it conformed to the realistic trend of twentieth-century thought; and its nature is therefore often inadequately interpreted. Many critical philosophers of the present day devote no more than a passing thought to it. (2) Speculative thought, as it has developed in Great Britain during the last century, has been largely filtered by interpreters : thus it very often loses the virility of its original forms. (3) Philosophy often gives the impression of being a different subject at each seat of learning; and with no agreement not only about what philosophy has proved but even about its nature, it is not surprising that it assumes a different colouring in the hands of each professor. (4) Speculation is sometimes referred to as the deductive study of God and

(*) Speculation in the realm of philosophy must be distinguished form speculation in science. Newton's theory of gravitation, for example, was at one stage a far-reaching and daring speculation; but it was methodological in nature, *i.e.* part of a process of discovery that ends in verification. In a word, it was what is known as a scientific hypothesis. Speculative philosophy, however, has no connexion with experiential verification.

the Soul, a description that is unduly narrow. An attempt will therefore be made to state some its main features.

The Problem of Speculation.

Philosophy has sought for knowledge about three great questions : (1) The Existence of God — or, since this theme as discussed by the great philosophers had little if any relation with the God of religious worship, but was an intellectual construct, it is better to use the philosophic concept of *The Absolute*; (2) The Immortality of the Soul, supposed to be centred in but separable from the body — the same ground is more or less covered by the Mind-Body problem; and (3) The Freedom of the Will.

Information in these spheres has been the goal, but this is not to be gathered at once from a study of the classical works. Much of the discussion is devoted to logical questions, which must be answered as a preliminary to investigating the chief aims. These questions, which are intended to lead to the desired goal, include those of the mind-body relation, the nature of categories, the thing-in-itself, analytic and synthetic propositions, internal and external relations, substance and accidents, matter, primary and secondary qualities, thing and its presentation, cause and effect, appearance and reality, the nature of truth, the one and the many, and so on. Discussions of these are usually so complex that they easily seem to be ends in themselves and their bearing on the three main goals may not be fully appreciated. Thus most of the great philosophical works have to do with matters that seem, if their real purpose is missed, to be of little importance.

The Field of Speculation

On account of the way in which philosophy has developed in the last century, changing from Idealism to Realism, most

of these problems have till lately been overshadowed by the great controversy between these two ways of thinking. This is partly because Realism has concentrated mostly on the problem of sense-perception, but the same attitudes dominate all other problems too. It is worth examining this controversy, because by so doing we shall be able to distinguish a new kind of philosophy from which the past differs very markedly.

This controversy — of which we now hear little — would seem to be a shallow one, for it effects a division in the wrong place; it is to be replaced by a division into Metaphysics and Epiphilosophy* (the meaning of this convenient word will become clear). None the less the older issue does involve questions of importance, which should not be neglected. Let us therefore see what the two controversies contain and in what way they are related.

We might begin by supposing that there are no Realists, because the term has fallen out of use, and because that school of thought, for example, which derives from Cambridge, is neither called a school of Realists by others nor by its own members; and no other school can claim the title so justly as the "Cambridge School". Nevertheless its members are Realists. There are, perhaps, two reasons why the title has sunk into abeyance : (a) there is no rival, Idealism showing but few signs of life; (b) philosophic activity does not focus on a realist *metaphysic* but on the *logical analysis* of (chiefly) common sense beliefs. In spite of these things, however, the Cambridge School may be taken to be realist; and Realism

---

(*) This division or something very near it, was first made by Professor Broad (*Scientific Thought*, London, 1923, Introduction), though he referred not to Epiphilosophy, but to Critical Philosophy. My view of speculation will appear somewhat different from his.

may therefore be defined largely through the features of this school.

The most obvious feature of Realism, one that is usually associated with it, may be summarised for convenience as a *Principle of Persistence*, which is that physical objects, such as tables and chairs, do not depend for their existence on being perceived or experienced — the well known mind-independence property. This principle does not, however, serve as a satisfactory distinguishing mark of Realism, because — though it formed the hunting ground of philosophers thirty years ago — few, if any, dispute it now; and secondly Idealism could take up either stand with regard to it. It was false only for traditional Berkeleism* but for other philosophy, least of all Ontological Idealism. Accordingly this principle fails to distinguish between Realism and Idealism.

A broad feature of some Realism lies in an insistence on *verification*, *i. e.* verification in a broad sense in terms of objects of perception. In an age in which the scientific outlook has grown more prominent, the general temper is likely to be shot through with a sceptical attitude towards the unverifiable. There is a tendency to regard the unverifiable, however interesting it may be, as ineffectual; however true or interesting it may be, it cannot command attention unless it makes some difference to something . That Realism of this kind contains this scientific or pragmatic element, few will deny; but it will not be so readily admitted that this is its main feature. All this, however, requires more explicit examination.

(*) Two distinct philosophies can be taken out of Berkeley's work, which it is convenient to distinguish but which it is sometimes convenient to call Berkeleism.

By the traditional Berkeley I merely mean that interpretation of Berkeley's philosophy according to which things depend upon the human mind, whereas Berkeley himself makes them depend on God.

Any verifiable statement is one which can be, in principle, more or less completely demonstrated or falsified, that is to say, we could easily think of situations which would tend to support or refute the statement. The following statements are confirmable or refutable : "The earth is round" (true); "Two and two make five" (false). The following are unverifiable : "The Soul is a simple substance"; "Physical objects are, in the Lockean sense, substances"; "Universals are subsistent entities, with being on their own account".

Not all realist philosophies, however, conform to this principle; indeed it is probable that very few of them do. What I would suggest is that it expresses the "spirit" of realist philosophies, is something which they aimed at becoming : it might be called an ideal type, to which instances of Realism conformed more or less inadequately; or, to use an old expression, it might be thought of as a final cause. Epiphilosophy would then be Realism in its last form.

To see that this is a fair interpretation, we require to state the conception of verifiability of this broad kind rather more precisely. This *might* be done by means of what may be described as the Berkeley-Russell view of acquaintance, defined as follows : The universe contains either entities with which we are directly acquainted through the senses, or entities that can be defined in terms of these. It is tempting to use this principle because it has pervaded Cambridge philosophy for many years; but it is too stringent. Since it expresses all things in terms of sense-data, the ultimate object (according to this principle) with which we can be directly acquainted, it would fail to cover certain forms of epiphilosophy that do not regard sense-data as the ultimate constituents of the physical world. It will be safer therefore, and more satisfactory for the purpose of defining speculation, to have recourse to a broader principle, which we may call the

Principle of Empiricism or Principle of Sense-experience :
*The universe contains either entities that we can perceive by the senses
or entities that can be defined in terms of these.*

In accordance with this principle, the First Sea Lord,
for example, would not be an entity that could be perceived
by the senses; but it could be defined in terms of such, for
it means that there exists one admiral that has a superior rank
to all other admirals, and if necessary admirals and ranking
can be defined in terms of recognition, commanding, and
order-papers.

If now we regard this principle as characteristic of Epi-
philosophy, we observe that it is realist in virtue of its first
part; hence some forms of Realism may satisfy the first part
but not the second, and so must be classed not as critical but
as speculative. Locke will occur to us as an example of a
speculative realist (on account of his unknowable substratum);
Meinong and the New Realists among more modern think-
ers also fail to satisfy the second part of the principle (for
them, all thoughts, images, universals, and erroneous percep-
tions were "subsistent", "eternal", and independent of being
thought of or experienced at all, so that instead of being
defined in terms of objects of perception these were given
a speculative status). The New Realists included, as well
as the American group, Mr. Bertrand Russell and Professor
Moore in their early days.

What is overlooked in this philosophy is that images,
thoughts, erroneous perceptions, and so on, are not in fact
objects of perception in the same way as tables and chairs.
To suppose they are is to fit the philosophy into Realism,
while to realise they are not is to see that the philosophy does
not conform to the type defined — it is unverifiable. Again
we might put the matter like this : that the *principle* that *all*
entities were objects of perception (so that none were left over

to be defined in terms of objects of perception) was not itself an object of perception, being unverifiable, but was on the contrary a transcendent principle. It is this observation — that this principle was not definable in terms of objects of perception — that now suggests classing such philosophers as *speculative*, even though they were realist : they were not realist in the ordinary English, non-philosophic sense, of not going beyond what is the case, what is verifiable, or what is perceivable through the senses.

The New Realists, then, deny the principle of empiricism and they do this by maintaining an unverifiable principle; that all entities are objects of perception. But the principle of empiricism can be denied in another way, and that is the way of speculative philosophy. Let us compare the two ways. The New Realists effect their aim by means of the Principle of Persistence, which they extend to cover images, thoughts, erroneous perceptions, and so on. Clearly when all entities become "subsistent", "eternal", or, as it were, "crystallised", they become objects of perception. Since, however, this principle does not serve as a satisfactory distinguishing mark of Epiphilosophy, we must appeal to the principle of empiricism. Now this principle draws the line in a wholly different place, and, in its mature form, rules out many forms of Realism : it rejects them for the same reason as it rejects Idealism — because they embody what is unverifiable. Let us make the reasons for these rejections quite clear. The New Realists come in conflict with the empiricism-principle; but not because they wish to, for they try to save it by adding to it the persistence-principle : they are Realists in spirit though not in fact. Idealists, on the other hand, freely and openly oppose the empiricism-principle. In both cases this principle leads to the rejection of their views.

It becomes easy to see now why the realist-idealist controversy is a shallow one. The most important feature of present-day Realism is that everything is verifiable or definable in terms of some set of experiences. Now if this rules out certain schools of Realism, this feature obviously cuts across the realist-idealist distinction. We must therefore draw a dividing line in a new place, and according to a new basis of division, thus distinguishing between Metaphysics and Epiphilosophy defined by the Principle of Empiricism.

In opposition to this principle, Speculative Philosophy asserts that some entities and principles exist that cannot be defined in terms of objects of perception : this assertion may be called a *Principle of Transcendence.* Thus a philosophy is speculative if it embraces any principles of transcendence; and almost every form of Idealism (all except traditional Berkeleism) was speculative. To sum up : *Epiphilosophy is*

Diagrams of the old division :

IDEALISTS : TRADITIONAL BERKELEY AND OTHERS.	REALISTS : NEW REALISTS AND PHENOMENALISTS.*

And diagrams of the new division :

SPECULATIVE PHILOSOPHERS : IDEALISTS (EXCEPT TRADITIONAL BERKELEY) AND NEW REALISTS.	EPIPHILOSOPHERS : TRADITIONAL BERKELEY AND PHENOMENALISTS.

(*) The later form of empiricism at Cambridge is often described as Phenomenalism.

defined by the Principle of Empiricism and Speculative Philosophy by the Principle of Transcendence.

Now this definition, which is effected by means of the conception of *transcendence*, and explicated in the statement that entities or principles exist beyond what is verifiable, beyond what is definable by sense-experiences, is a negative one; and the negative definition, which has often been viewed with disfavour may will be regarded as unsatisfactory here.

We are confronted with the indefinability of Speculative Philosophy; for every term we use in an attempted definition is itself speculative or goes outside the realm of things with which we are familiar in any science. It is no use to define speculation by transcendence, or by saying that it is the science of the Ultimate Truth, the Truth behind the given, a rethinking of experience, or the like : each definition offered is as indefinable as speculation itself and as much an enigma.

The reason for this may be that the special sciences have their special objects of study — objects with which the experience of each man renders him more or less familiar. But speculative philosophy has no such object : not only have we to find out how it works, as we might seek to do in the case of biology or physics, but we have to find out what it works at.

As the object of biology is life and of physics is matter, so the concern of speculation is with Thought. But what is thought ? We are often reminded by speculative philosophers to remember that it is not to be confused with psychological thought, with thoughts that may occur to any one, or with thought-processes. It is on the contrary *rational thought*. The principles of rational thought must not, however, have the barren character of the laws of formal logic; they must be synthetic. This power to create, to weave, has ever characterised thought as conceived by the great speculative

philosophers ; but it is not a plaything of the imagination, for it must synthesise according to a *rational criterion.* Speculative philosophy consists to a large extent of unfolding conceptions such as this; and the content unfolded, in its last analysis, constitutes Ultimate Truth. Now it is to be observed that speculation *creates its own object,* by the synthetic nature of thought itself; it spins its own web of concepts. The definition of speculation is to be sought, therefore, rather at the end than at the outset.

We are driven, then, to the disappointing conclusion that speculation or thought in general is indefinable and unexplainable. Indeed there is nothing new in this, for it was evident in the attitude of all the speculative philosophers : that is to say, in their view we have no right to demand such definition, in order to justify the notion of Thought; for this they regard as a prerequisite of philosophising at all.

These few remarks may serve to show how hopeless it is to try to grasp speculative philosophy without a deep study of it. The attitude of a speculator towards it might be described as follows. It is something that requires depth of search before its essence can be found. Being indefinable, it is something that must be grasped. No instructor can pass a conception to one that does not already have it; he can but arouse insight. Mere telling will not convey the notion of speculation, and the study of it can be pursued only by those that grasp the notion. There is required a certain speculative power, and without this corresponding speculative side to the mind, this kind of thinking must ever belong to another world. With this we may agree, provided we replace speculative power by psychological insight.

Speculative Objects of Study and Method.

The attempt at definition is abortive because it aims at

describing the transcendent in terms of what is familiar; we must therefore be content to consider the transcendent in its own right.

Speculation studies not natural but transcendent objects, their properties, and the relations between them, and its task is to establish the existence — transcendent existence — of these. What, then, is the method used ?

The method is *a priori* or *transcendental* reasoning. Natural reasoning may be divided into scientific and deductive, but speculation certainly does not use the former. Deduction is sometimes used, but is subsidiary. The belief is commonly held not only by critical philosophers but also by speculators that deduction is primary. This is perhaps due to a geometrical analogy and thus founded on the belief that philosophy is based on self-evident truths — axioms, in the old sense — from which deductive conclusions are derived. Geometry is, however, no longer regarded in this light by mathematicians, since they do not attach any meaning to "self-evident truth"; philosophers have defined it as *an intuition* but have had no success in attaching any clear meaning to this. Moreover, most of the reasoning that they have applied to any supposed axioms or intuitions has been transcendental in character. The structure of such reasoning appears to be this : a contradiction is observed or some puzzling circumstance, which can be resolved by *positing* a certain transcendent entity; this entity is then transcendentally established as the explanation of the contradiction or puzzle. Kant and Fichte used this mode of argument throughout; Leibniz used it to prove the Pre-Established Harmony. It does not seem to have struck these thinkers that a transcendent entity provides no explanation and that its real nature — its cash-value — is this : of a certain problem no natural solution has been found, and hence a non-natural explanation, of which we can

understand nothing, must exist. Their general procedure has been to use metaphor and rough analogies to convey by rhetoric an idea of a transcendent concept, and then to set up elaborate transcendent superstructures designed to support it; discussion consisted of arguments for and against the truth of a concept rather than of trying to state what the concept meant. By proceeding in this way, one transcendent entity would lead transcendentally to another, and thus a hierarchy would be created, the chief member of which was the Absolute, or Ultimate Explanation of the Universe. Absolute Truth was attained if the hierarchy led to a self-explanatory concept; this was sometimes given the support of the proposition that the hierarchy was "circular" or led back to its starting-point, so as to be self-consistent, making Truth a body of mutually supporting concepts. The self-explanatory concept was the Absolute, the transcendentally rational. All this is the activity of transcendental thought, whose synthesising power or activity is conceived to be to lead us to the discovery of Truth, which consists in distinctions, at first regarded as absolute, and then seen to be relative and merely *aspects* of some organic whole : *transcendental thought analyses wholes into disconnected parts and then sets itself the problem of over-riding its own distinctions.* This is what, from Plato to Hegel, has been known as the Problem of the One and the Many; but its principal form is that of Dualism, whose importance as a central conception in speculation cannot be overestimated.

It is a reaction to this mode of thinking that modern logico-analytical philosophy has arisen, and it is these conceptions that it has been concerned to attack.

I have introduced the word "Epiphilosophy" for the general philosophical position of which logical analysis is the chief form, because it designates the denial of what is "inner", of what cannot be defined in terms of sense-experience. But,

if the thesis of this book is correct, certain conceptions, which according to logical analysis cannot be related to sense, can in fact be so related; accordingly "Epiphilosophy" is not simply a name for Modern Empiricism, but a name for any kind of empiricism that has too narrow a framework.

Part II.

Logical Analysis

"Words, words, words." — Shakespeare

"For an answer which cannot be expressed the question too cannot be expressed.

The riddle does not exist.

If a question can be put at all, then it **can** also be answered." — Ludwig Wittgenstein.

CHAPTER III.

The Concept of Definition

"Usque adeo necesse est ut vel summi viri, quamdiu abstractionibus indulgent, voces nulla certa significatione, praeditas, et meras, scholasticorum umbras sectentur." — Berkeley.

"It seems to me very curious that language ... should have grown up just as if it were expressly designed to mislead philosophers; and I do not know why it should have. Yet it seems to me there is no doubt that in ever so many instances it has." — G. E. Moore.

The contrast between speculative philosophy and logical analysis is as great a contrast as can be imagined. No development in the history of philosophy was so drastic as the change-over from speculation to analysis. Philosophers wrangled over the best way to speculate, but they tacitly agreed that to speculate was to philosophise and to philosophise was to speculate. We must, then, try to imagine in some degree the magnitude of the total change involved in asking instead what did speculative propositions *mean*. Mr. Bertrand Russell and Professor G. E. Moore brought about this change.

The stimuli were twofold : the unsatisfactory paradoxes in mathematics* and the far-fetched Idealism at the close of the last century — mainly the latter. The stimuli will not be considered here for two reasons : the mathematical approach to the new philosophy was indirect; and the opposition to Absolutism would probably strike a speculative thinker as displaying little appreciation of what Idealists had in

---

(*) Mathematics has started many a philosopher on his way.

mind, so that we can scarcely look on Absolutism in itself as the stimulus to analysis. Thus the Russell-Moore development seems to have included the highly doubtful assumption that Absolutism was intended to present certain common-sense facts about the external world.* This assumption, however, even if present, is of but small moment to the logical analyst; for what matters is firstly that the new approach struck the keynote of common sense and accurate logic, secondly that there arose a systematic method that seemed to promise a clear solution of philosophic problems, and thirdly any mis-interpretation there may have been did not concern the very general features of speculation.

Logical analysis has to do with the meanings of words : it aims at discovering how words are used, the goal being to clarify thought. Language is held to be in an unsuspected way misleading, because of (i) ambiguity and (ii) the ways in which words can be arranged in sentences. The distress, to which Professor Moore gives vent as quoted at the beginning of the chapter, is due in part to the richness in ambiguity of our language; but that is not all he means, and the other way in which language misleads philosophers will largely occupy our attention in this and the next chapters, for its removal is more important for logical analysis than the removal of ambiguities. It is important to stress this second feature not only because its discovery has become re-cognised as a Russell-Moore addition to the history of philosophy, but because it acquits the logico-analysts from the

---

(*) *Cf. e.g.* G. E. Moore, *Philosophical Studies*, London, 1922, "The Conception of Reality", in which he regards Bradley's propositions *Time is unreal* and *Time exists* as incompatible. Bradley's view, one would suggest, would probably be that these two propositions had very little connexion with one another.

charge of merely repeating the word-discussions of, say, Locke or the Scholastics; for if the logico-analytic philosophers had merely called attention to the ambiguity of words — a thing noticed by most thinkers — they could scarcely merit respect for originality. Thus though the meanings of words presents in a way the same problems as it always has done, namely, definition, yet *the notion of definition has undergone an important change.* Logical analysis appears trivial to the speculative philosopher when told it deals with definition, for he knows what definition is; but he may not know what the consequences are of the logico-analytic view of definition.

Certain kinds of word-discussions are unquestionably trivial. Thus if two people use different terminologies, both being quite precise, a discussion of the relations to each other of the two terminologies is not a matter of philosophic significance : thus it does not matter from this point of view whether you read in Arabic or in English. Philosophic discussion about the meanings of words is of quite a different character; it may or may not ultimately prove important, but it is of importance to speculative philosophers, and the only way to be convinced of this is to follow some analysis carried out — to see the method working.

The justification of their attitude attempted sometimes by those that are unsympathetic to word-discussion is to say that language cannot do justice to thought. This seems to be a psychological rationalisation of a prejudice. To this attitude one might reply "Whereof one cannot speak, one must be silent." [1] If the speculators found language inadequate for expressing their thoughts, how did they manage to express them ? Mr. Ayer seems to have entertained the same

---

(1) Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-philosophicus*, London, 1922, 7.

idea when he quoted [1] Dr. Johnson's remark about Jacob Boehme : "If Jacob saw the unutterable, Jacob should not have attempted to utter it." Certainly if philosophical thought is intended to be rational it should be capable of verbal expression; it is only to experiences that language cannot do justice.

The logical analyst, on the other hand, not only refrains from trying to discuss what transcends the discussable but emphasises the importance of finding out how words are used, not to refer to the unutterable, but to express ordinary common sense propositions. The question is not, how *ought* people, especially philosophers, to use language; but, how *do* people commonly use language — what are the common meanings, which everybody must recognise, of certain words ? This point may be brought out by reference to the "Pickwickian Senses" of words. Professor Moore adopted the phrase from a striking passage in *Pickwick Papers*. and introduced it into philosophy to denote senses of words, sometimes used by philosophers, which they never bore in ordinary language. Mr. Pickwick was addressing the Pickwick Club and his remarks were received with unstinted approbation. He continued :

> Let them look abroad and contemplate the scenes which were enacting around them. Stage coaches were upsetting in all directions, horses were bolting, boats were overturning, and boilers were bursting, (Cheers — a voice "No."). No. (Cheers.) Let that honourable Pickwickian who cried "No" so loudly come forward and deny it, if he could. (Cheers.) Who was it that cried "No" ? (Enthusiastic cheering). Was it some vain and disappointed man — who, jealous of the praise which had been — perhaps undeservedly — bestowed on his (Mr. Pickwick's) researches, and smarting under the censure which had been heaped upon his own feeble attempts at rivalry now took this vile and calumnious mode of —
>
> Mr. BLOTTON (of Aldgate) rose to order. Did the honourable Pickwickian allude to him ? (Cries of "Order", "Chair", "Yes", "No", "Go", "Go on", "Leave off", etc.)

(1) A. J. Ayer, "The Genesis of Metaphysics", *Analysis*, Vol. I. Oxford, 1933-4, p. 57.

Mr. PICKWICK would not put up to be put down by clamour. He *had* alluded to the honourable gentleman. (Great excitement).

Mr. BLOTTON would only say then, that he repelled the hon. gent's false and scurrilous accusation, with profound contempt. (Great cheering.). The hon. gent. was a humbug, (Immense confusion, and loud cries of "Chair", and "Order".)

Mr. A. SNODGRASS rose to order. He threw himself upon the chair. (Hear.) He wished to know whether this disgracefull contest between two members of that club should be allowed to continue. (Hear, hear.)

The CHAIRMAN was quite sure the hon. Pickwickian would withdraw the expression he had just made use of.

Mr. BLOTTON, with all possible respect for the chair, was quite sure he would not.

The CHAIRMAN felt it his imperative duty to demand of the honourable gentleman, whether he had used the expression which had just escaped him in a common sense.

Mr. BLOTTON had no hesitation in saying that he had not — he had used the word in its Pickwickian sense. (Hear, hear.) He was bound to acknowedge that; personally, he entertained the highest regard and esteem for the honourable gentleman; he had merely considered him a humbug in a Pickwickian point of view. (Hear, hear).

Mr. PICKWICK felt much gratified or by the fair, candid, and full explanation of his honourable friend. He begged it to be at once understood, that his own observations had been merely intended to bear a Pickwickian construction. (Cheers)[1].

This passage may bring out the point if that, philosophers use words in Pickwickian senses, these can be understood only if they can be translated into ordinary language. With this we may turn to the question of definition.

In the first place we are neither defining *concepts* nor *terms*.[*] Philosophers in the past defined either; but not, I believe,

---

([1]) Charles Dickens, *Pickwick Papers*, chapter I.

([*]) It is extremely difficult to discover what a term is, as the word "term" was historically used. Professor Moore used it as synonymous with "word" in earlier writings, but this is certainly not what used to be meant by "a term".

because they meant to define words, or because what they did was equivalent to defining words. It will suffice to say that what philosophers now define are *words*, but that what they used to define concerned not words but something else. The current usage of the word "definition" is extremely simple : to define a word is to give its meaning, and to give its meaning is to say how it is used in ordinary language. This may be summed up by the vaguer phraseology : a definition is the statement of the meaning of a word*. Thus "A triangle *is* a three-sided figure" may be translated by "The word 'triangle' *means* a three-sided figure".

The word "definition" may be used either for the whole statement or for the defining phrase "a three-sided figure". This definition tells us how the word "triangle" is used.

There are similar processes for phrases and statements, but with the latter it is not in keeping with our usage of language to talk of *defining*. Instead we talk of *analysing*. It turns out that the definition of words is only a particular form of the analysis of statements.** The importance of this more

---

(*) Meaning in this sense has some connexion with connotation; but this word has been used by logicians in so many different ways that I shall follow the general practise of the logical-analysts and avoid the word altogether. For example, some logicians would have said that the connotation of water was H_2O; but though the property H_2O marks off water unambiguously from other substances, it certainly is not the *meaning* of "water", for we knew what "water" meant before we knew any chemistry. If we insist that physics has a special language of its own, then in terms of that language we can say that water in the ordinary sense has an H_2O structure : thus if we say that water *is* H_2O, we are adopting into the language of science the word "water", spelt and pronounced as it is in ordinary speech, but which is merely a synonym for "H_2O".

(**) I will talk of *statements* and the *analysis of statements*. This is not universal among English logical analysts, though it appears to be the practice of the Vienna Circle. English usage is to distinguish between a sentence and

general form lies in its relevance to the second misleading character of language referred to above. In view of this general form of analysis, which is far from trivial, it is necessary to dwell as a necessary preliminary on the somewhat trivial particular case of word-definition.

There are several kinds of definition. First there is the kind used above for illustration. Definitions of this kind are *conventional*, not in the sense that the community assembled in conclave and agreed *to* use words in a certain way — though this wild view is actually implied by some writers—but in the sense that the community agrees in using words in the ways in which they are fact used. People agree *in* using "triangle" to mean a three - sided figure; people agree *in* using "brother" so that "A is brother of B" means the same as "A is male and has a parent in common with B".

There are also arbitrary definitions of technical words, *i.e.* of new words, and of old words in new senses. Such definitions may become conventional through usage.

Again, there is a totally different kind of definition, which

---

what it assert namely, a proposition.   Thus you *utter* or *write* a sentence but *assert* a proposition; you *translate* a sentence but you *analyse* a proposition. There is no doubt that confusion results if we fail to distinguish the two; but in certain contexts the distinction renders discussion very cumbersome. Where no confusion is likely to occur, therefore, I adopt the word "statement", because you can not only utter or write a statement but you can assert it, and you can both translate a statement and analyse it.   That is no reason, then, why we should not use these words with "systematic ambiguity" of statements in the sense either of sentences or propositions.   That is to say in "Analysing a statement" and "Analysing a proposition," the word "Analysing" has different senses and is accordingly ambiguous.   But it is *systematically ambiguous* because used in connexion with things (*i.e.* sentences and propositions) of different "logical types".

does not give the *meaning* of a word, though it does tell how a word is used . Thus if I say that an apple is the same *sort* of thing as an orange, a lemon, and a grapefruit, I am stating something about the way the word "apple" is used, so that for instance you would not think of constructing a sentence like "I wrote a letter on the apple"; thus I am stating the *kind* of thing an apple is. Now a statement of this form may be called "extensive definition", for though it does not give a *meaning* it tells us about an important class to which the thing in question belongs and hence sets limits to the things of which the word in question may be used. We can also have Aristotelian definitions *per genus et differentiam* which explain how a word is used (though it is possible for definition to be of this kind and also conventional). If we define "man" as a featherless biped we are marking off clearly the set of things that can be called "men", but we are not giving the meaning of "man". Some definitions *per genus et differentiam* are not only of this kind but also give meaning. Perhaps "A man is an animal which is rational" is one. The featherless biped type of definition may be called "a sufficient description".

Now these definitions, which do not give meanings, are important in practice because in the majority of cases it is impossible to state conventional definitions. The latter are the ideal, but precision of discussion is sufficiently ensured by extensive definitions and sufficient descriptions.

For completeness, reference should be made to the so-called "ostensive definition", which is used for the situation in which a colour-word, for example, is explained by pointing to a colour denoted by it.

Perhaps the most important question that can arise in connexion with definition is what it is likely to do. One obvious merit is its power to make arguments precise. Nothing of the sort has ever before in the history of philosophy been

attempted on such a scale. The method of analysis may be regarded as an effort to establish a philosophical vocabulary which shall have the characteristics of a good symbolism—no ambiguities and no redundance. In the past philosophers occasionally drew attention to variations in the usage of certain words; but they were invariably words of a special sort beloved of philosophers, such as "idea". But until Professor Moore produced his version of analysis it was not realised that almost all, if not quite all, words were not only ambiguous but inordinately so. He has found that most words of common usage have a great many different usages and therefore a great many different meanings. Until attention is drawn to the fact, it seems incredible that a word should have meanings running into double figures. Obviously before this was noticed it was more difficult to maintain precision in argument — is it any wonder that philosophers both differed and did not know what they disagreed about ?

But it is essential to bear in mind that the curing of ambiguity is *not* held by its practitioners to be the *most* important function of logical analysis. Extensive definitions and sufficient descriptions are all that need be used in pointing out ambiguites or even in constructing valid arguments. Clearly the stress which the logical analyst places on conventional definition or material analysis points to a still more important business of analysis than that of tidying up.

This more positive function — if that of tidying up be negative — may be framed in the form of a principle if we wish. It may be expressed by saying that there are no senses of words other than those which they customarily have; or that there is no special philosophical vocabulary without an equivalent in ordinary language*; or that there are *priv-*

(¹) It might be said that Professor Moore aims at building up a philosophical vocabulary; but if so, his words would each be definable in

ileged senses of words. Whichever way we like to frame the principle, it derives from the notion of definition as a statement of *meaning*. Now the only meanings a word can have are all the meanings that it can have compatible with its usage in ordinary language. Examples of these senses in use can always be found — for a sense for which there was no usage would not be a sense. Hence definitions of one sort or another can always be set up, and beyond these senses there are none. There are, therefore, *no* meanings of words withs pecial philosophic import which are irreducible to common meanings (*i.e.* which are indefinable in terms of common meanings) — no speculative philosophic terminology *privileged* to express Ultimate Truth to which ordinary language "cannot do justice". Behaving in opposition to this principle constitutes *misuse of language**. And the doctrine of definition and analysis may be thought of as a principle of the Use of Language.

This principle differently put becomes the *doctrine of Non-Sense* or part of it; for, if there are no meanings beyond those that can be found in a language in use, then the use of a word in a supposed sense other than one of these, some special or privileged philosophical sense, is out of the question : there is no such sense, and the statement containing the word is *NonSense*. Doubtless you are at liberty to define arbitrarily a new sense for an old word; but you *must*, if you require such an extra meaning, *define* the word. Either the word has to

---

terms of the speech we all know — there is no philosophical vocabulary to which common language will not do justice.

Perhaps a remark ought to be made by way of explanation. Clearly ordinary language is not so good as this proposed philosophic vocabulary would be; but only because it is cumbersome, and not because it would fall in principle to express the same meanings.

(*) Clearly not bad grammar — we might say bad logical grammar, however.

have a meaning belonging to it in our language or the word has to be defined. Speculative philosophers, we note, did *not* use words with known meanings and did *not* define them thus arbitrarily, and so their statements make no sense, *i. e.* are NonSense. For there are but three alternatives — a word has a common meaning, has an arbitrarily defined meaning in terms of common meanings, or has *no meaning*. I write the word "NonSense" with two capitals to show that it is a technical word signifying *Lacking meaning;* otherwise it might be understood to mean merely *silly*. It is, however, becoming more customary to use the word "Non-significant".

CHAPTER IV.

Criteria of Meaning.

The framework of analysis now becomes widened : the analysis of concepts, which is equivalent to the definition of words, is replaced by the analysis of propositions, which is equivalent to *the translation of statements*. There is a counterpart of conventional definition, which has been called "material analysis[1]." We may say, for example, that the definition of the relation "brother of" is the quality *male* and the relation *having a common parent with;* or we may say that the material analysis of the statement "A is the brother of B" is given by "A is male and has a parent in common with B". Thus far, there is no essential difference between the two ways of putting the matter.

Material analysis may be regarded as a generalised form of conventional definition : that is to say, instead of giving a definition of the form "The word 'W' means so and so", we are to take a *statement* embodying the word "W" and say that it means the same as a certain *statement* embracing the features that defined "W". Thus in the example offered above, the statement "A is brother of B" is considered instead of the words "brother of", and instead of the defining properties *male* and *having a common parent with* attention is given to a certain statement embracing these, namely, "A is male and has a parent in common with B". Thus instead of the *meaning*

---

(1) See John Wisdom, The Aristotelian Society's Supplementary Volume, No. XIII, London, 1934, pp. 68-9.

of words, this change stresses the *equivalence of statements*. Material analysis, then, has the form : "The statement 'S1' means the same as the statement 'S2' "; and "S2" is said to be *a translation* of "S1". Thus the method of analysis becomes a process of translating one statement by another.

The purpose of this procedure is clarification : if a given statement is not clear, it is to be translated by an equivalent and fuller statement, which it is hoped will be clearer. The application to speculative philosophy is simply this : the logical analyst, who does not attach any clear meaning to speculative statements, tries to translate them by others that contain no obscurity. The possibility of doing this constitutes a criterion of meaning; if it cannot be done he considers that the speculative statements are NonSense. But this conclusion is one that he holds to be probable and not wholly proved. This development of analysis is due to Professor Moore and Mr. Bertrand Russell[1].

Professor Moore has also provided a criterion of a very different kind, based upon a principle of commonsense : according to this, no philosophical statement can be true if it contradicts commonsense perceptual statements. He has written that certain statements are both true and known to be true in an absolutely unqualified sense. Thus "The earth has existed for many years past", "Many human bodies have lived on the earth", and "I am conscious now" are unconditionally true, *i.e.* their truth or falsity does not depend on what meaning is attached to "earth", "exist", and so on. On the contrary these statements are completely unambiguous, and we all understand exactly what they *mean*. We may,

---

(1)   G. E. Moore, Lectures as cited in Preface; B.A.W. Russell, on the theory of descriptions, referred to below, Ch. VI.

however, have difficulty in deciding upon the correct *analyses* of their meanings — indeed satisfactory analyses would not be claimed by logical analysts to have been as yet produced. But this does not prevent our *understanding* the statements — indeed, we can scarcely analyse them before we first understand them. Of all commonsense statements, then, provided they are used with ordinary senses attached to the words, we can say that we know what they *mean* but do not know their analyses.

Broadly speaking the principle of common sense implies that no speculative statement may be incompatible with commonsense statements such as "The earth has existed for many years past", or "Hens lay eggs", and so on;[1] for it is contended that thinkers have constructed systems of philosophy conflicting with such statements. Thus to the logical analyst some idealists have held views that seem to deny the truth of simple statements such as "I am seeing a table", "That is an inkstand", "That is a coin". There are two inferences to be made from this approach : if a satisfactory theory of perception can be framed, it can be attained, Professor Moore has urged, only by analysing statements of the kind just described; and — the concern of this book — speculative statements that have been proved incompatible with these are NonSense.*

(1) G. E. Moore, "A Defence of Common Sense", *Contemporary British Philosophy*, Vol. II, London, 1925, pp. 198 - 9; *cf.* also "The Nature and Reality of Objects of Perception", *Philosophical Studies*, London, 1922, pp. 64 - 5.

(*) It is possible that Professor Moore himself would have considered them false rather than NonSense.

Partly as a result of Professor Wittgenstein's work,[1] a rather different criterion has been devoloped by Professor Carnap,[2] who was followed by Mr. Ayer[3], and many others.

In order to effect an analysis, according to Professor Carnap, it becomes necessary to ask what *rules* govern our translation of statements; for language has a certain structure which must not be strained. We must, therefore, find out how a passage may be effected from one statement to another without violating the structure of the language to which they belong, *i.e.* we must discover how from given statements others may be *inferred*. For example there are rules of language that permit us to pass from "All men are mortal and Socrates is a man" to "Socrates is mortal", but not to pass from "Tipperary Tim is winning and winning is pleasant" to "Tipperary Tim is pleasant."

Now such linguistic transformations depend only on the *formal* character of statements. Hence analysis is, as it were, a kind of *logical grammar* or *logical syntax* : analysis operates in accordance with a set of linguistic rules governing the structure of language, and clearly *NonSense* results if we violate those rules.

The pressing thing is to find out how far philosophical statements are on the one hand *translatable* or on the other are *NonSense*. For this purpose we distinguish (1) real-object statements, (2) linguistic statements, and (3) pseudo-object statements, which may be illustrated as follows :— (1) "This rose is red" is a real-object statement which concerns an object, namely, the rose. (2) "The word 'rose' is a thing-designa-

(1)   Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, London, 1922.

(2)   Rudolf Carnap, *The Unity of Science*, London, 1934; *Philosophy and Logical Syntax*, London 1935 ; and *The Logical Syntax of Language*,   London, 1937.

(3)   A. J. Ayer, *Language, Truth, and Logic*, London, 1936.

tion" is a linguistic statement, for it is about the word "rose" and not about an object, rose. (3) "Roses are things" is a pseudo-object statement because it *appears* to be about certain objects, namely, roses, whereas it is actually equivalent to (2) and hence is merely about the *word* "rose".

In analysis it is advisable to transform pseudo-object statements into linguistic statements; otherwise subsequent reasoning may lead to NonSense. For example there is the somewhat naive train of reasoning : "A chair is a logical construction;* I am sitting on a chair; therefore I am sitting on a logical construction". Indeed this is formally valid if, on the lines of Aristotelian logic, we hypostatise *logical construction* and suppose that the words stand for some*thing*. On the other hand, if we replace "a logical construction" by "an article of furniture", we obtain a valid and sensible train of reasoning. We have here, therefore, an example of the misleading character of language, for the grammatical form of the first statement is *not* a guide to its logical form. In order to forestall the mistake we must translate the pseudo-object statement, "A chair is a logical construction," by the linguistic statement, "The word 'chair' is a construction-designation;" once this is done, there ceases to be any semblance of reasoning whatever.

This process of translating pseudo-object statements into linguistic statements is roughly equivalent to what speculative philosophers aimed at doing when they strove to reject and overcome the tendency to *hypostatise*. Many of them saw that there was a marked difference in kind between entities in general and *things*, and repeatedly pointed out that to treat such entities as *things*, to *hypostatise*, was to vitiate philosophy;

(*) It will suffice to understand by this that a chair is a logical requirement without being part of the ultimate furniture of the universe.

but, without our means of effecting linguistic translations, they could not express themselves at all without hypostatising. In spite of great efforts, therefore, philosophy has produced NonSense based on pseudo-object statements. No one maintains, however, that we should always use the linguistic translation : for certain purposes pseudo-object statements need not mislead, and may be safely used.

Pseudo-object statements may be called statements in the *material mode of speech*, and linguistic statements may be called statements in the *formal mode of speech*. The point to remember is that real-object statements, such as "The sugar is on the table", cannot be translated into the formal mode, whereas all statements in the material mode can; and further that speculative assertions rest upon statements expressed in the material mode. Thus the statement, "Friendship is not a quality but a relation," is a statement in the material mode which may be translated into a statement in the formal mode : "The word 'friendship' is not a quality-designation but a relation-designation." Failure to do this may result in our hypostatising friendship instead of merely talking about the word "friendship". And there can be no doubt that much speculative matter deals with "ultimate truths" of this character.[1]

The method proceeds by showing that a given speculative statement belongs to the material mode of speech, *i.e.* is a pseudo-object statement, which is done simply by translating it into formal mode of speech. It is, of course, also necessary to understand why when this has been achieved speculative deductions built up on the speculation fall away at once. The reason for this second point is that speculation contains the assumption that it rests on real-object statements, and

---

(1) Rudolf Carnap, *Philosophy and Logical Syntax*, London, 1935, pp. 58-72; *The Logical Syntax of Language*, London, 1937, pp. 281-307.

once that is exposed all subsequent reasoning based on this assumption becomes invalid. Once we can show that a speculation rests on a pseudo-object statement, it is easy to see that belief in the speculation arises from the assumption that the speculation rests on a real object statement. This being a mistake, the speculation is convicted of hypostasis.* Let us take an example. Supposing that reflection convinces a philosopher that *Time is unreal*. He may proceed to build up on that conclusion a system of philosophy asserting that Time is self-contradictory, an appearance, a manifestation of a self-consistent Reality — a result that embodies the assumption that there is something called "Time" and that thing has not got very satisfactory properties. Now if he realises that *Time is unreal* is an assertion that is equivalent to an assertion to the effect that *time* is an abstraction from times and that times are connected by *temporal* relations in a *temporal* series; and if further he realises that this assertion is equivalent to one about the use of the word "time", namely that

---

(*) It is noteworthy that logical analysis should convict speculation of hypostasis, a fault that speculative philosophers strove conscientiously to avoid. Evidently the unconscious need to hypostatise was too strong for their conscious intentions.

Yet it is possible that not only is it speculative philosophy that hypostatises, but also, strange as it may seem, logical analysis. The present approach will not of course be guilty of this, but the methods discussed prior to it may be; for if we continually ask what a statement *means*, we may quite naturally begin to wonder about pseudo-questions. Thus we may wonder what is *the status of meaning*, and perhaps say that meaning lies in facts or in coherence between propositions. Indeed the practice of talking of analysing *meaning* arouses the idea that there is an object called "meaning". Hence from the standpoint of the present approach assertions in terms of meaning are pseudo-object statements in the material mode of speech; this approach would therefore translate such statements into the formal mode, and thus avoid referring to meaning.

it provides a short and convenient way of referring to temporal relations in a temporal series; then there no longer exists a something called "time" which can give rise to speculative conundrums.

By means of this linguistic approach, we are in a position to appreciate not only the logical source of the error that occurs in speculation, but also its nature *i.e.* that it consists of hypostasis or failure to recognise a pseudo-object statement for what it is — a misleadingly expressed linguistic statement.

Here the stress is on language conceived as a calculus of symbols interrelated independently of their meaning, a conception to which a brief reference will be made at the end of Chapter VI. Whatever be the merits or otherwise of this, it will be seen that this approach has the same effect as before upon speculation.

Historically this approach developed from the verification-criterion, which will now be described. It was put forward by Professor Wittgenstein[1] who has been followed in it by Professor Carnap,[2] Mr. Ayer[3] and others. It has been criticised by Dr. Ewing[4] and Mr. Berlin[5].

It is a cardinal principle of science that hypotheses must be verified. Thus, if we deduce from the hypothesis of gravitation that an eclipse of the sun will occur at a certain time,

(1) Wittgenstein, *Op. cit.*

(2) Carnap, *Op. cit.*; and *The Unity of Science*, London, 1934.

(3) Ayer, *Op. cit.*; and *The Foundations of Empirical Knowledge*, London, 1940.

(4) A.C.Ewing, "Meaninglessness", *Mind*, N.S. Vol. XLVI, No. 183, London, 1937.

(5) I. Berlin, "Verification", *Proc. Arist. Soc.*, N.S. Vol. XXXIX, London, 1938 - 9,

the hypothesis is verified (true or probable) if the eclipse is actually observed, and it is false if the eclipse does not happen. Here "verification" obviously means *confirmation*, and it is in this sense that the scientist seeks verification, for he hopes to find that his hypothesis is confirmed and not false.

This, then, is the sense relevant to scientific practice. But we must distinguish from it the methodological principle *underlying* the practice. According to this a hypothesis must be either confirmable *or* falsifiable — what is neither the one nor the other is not a hypothesis. Now a hypothesis of this kind has no observable instances; hence, if it is to be confirmed or falsified, it must be possible to *deduce* from it a prediction that is observable — otherwise what we are dealing with is not a hypothesis. Thus, confirmable or falsifiable, it is the nature of a hypothesis to be tested by observation. Even the aether was a genuine hypothesis because it was amen able to empirical testing; it was simply false because a prediction deduced from it was observed to be false. On the other hand the transcendental statements of metaphysics cannot be tested by observation, and they are therefore not hypotheses. Thus the *collective mind* is not a hypothesis because no predictions can be deduced from it that are of a perceptual kind. Again "if a scientist should venture to make an assertion from which no perceptive propositions could be deduced, what should we say to that ? Suppose, *e.g.*, he asserts that there is not only a gravitational field having an effect on bodies according to the known laws of gravitation, but also a *levitational field*, and on being asked what sort of effect this levitational field has, according to his theory, he answers that there is no observable effect, in other words, he confesses his inability to give rules according to which we could deduce perceptive propositions from his assertion. In that case our reply is : Your assertion is no assertion at all; it does not speak about

anything; it is nothing but a series of empty words; it is simply without sense."[1]

It is the methodological custom to use "verification" to include both confirmation and falsification; it simply refers to *testing*. In this sense, then, verification is a methodological principle and is the key to the scientific outlook.

This is, broadly speaking, the principle that has been adopted the school of logical positivists — since developments arose out of discussions as much as from publications it is difficult to decide with certainty the part played by the various contributors. Positivists, from the historical point of view, were influenced by the "descriptive interpretation of science", whose most notable modern scientific exponents were Mach[2] and Pearson[3]. This was that hypotheses, which did not stand for anything observable, constituted a telescoped description of innumerable observable facts. Whether or not the verification principle was exactly the same as this, it is easy to see that they both had in common the idea that hypotheses must be related to perception in a way that can be fairly precisely expressed. In this connexion, Newton's *"Hypotheses non fingo"* should not be forgotten; it has the same import, for by "hypotheses" he meant the transcendental, and not scientific hypotheses which in fact he freely used. There was a second influence, this time on the philosophical side, namely that of Berkeley and Hume. Though Berkeley's note of empiricism was conveyed through Hume what he actually says differs considerably from Hume and has in fact the same import as Mach and Pearson : "Force, gravity, attraction,

(1)   Rudolf Carnap, *Philosophy and Logical Syntax*, London, 1935, pp. 13 - 4.

(2)   Ernst Mach, *The Science of Mechanics*, Chicago, 1907.

(3)   Karl Pearson, *The Grammar of Science*, London, 1892.

and words of this sort, are serviceable for reasonings and computations concerning motion and bodies in motion, but not for understanding the simple nature of motion itself, or for denoting so many distinct qualities. Certainly, as regards attraction, it is clear that it is adopted by Newton, not as a real, physical quality, but merely as a mathematical hypothesis."[1]   Hume, though further from the descriptive interpretation of science and from the principle of verifiability in its general form, was closer to this principle in one respect, in that he raised in an acute form the Berkeleian question of finding a criterion of meaning.

Hume held "that all our simple ideas in their first appearance, are derived from simple impressions which are correspondent to them, and which they exactly represent."[2] This implies a test for the meanings of terms, which he gives explicitly : "When we entertain, therefore, any suspicion that a philosophical term is employed without any meaning or idea.., we need but enquire, *from what impression is that supposed idea derived* ?"[3]   To this Berkeley subscribed in many places, though he avoided its narrowness or rather refused to accept it as a universal criterion, as is clear from passages such as that just quoted.   Hume's view is exactly equivalent to the scholastic dictum, "*Nihil est in intellectu quod non fuerit in sensu*", which expresses a narrower form of Empiricism than Berkeley's or than that conveyed by the principle of verifiability.   The point of this principle may be brought out more clearly by considering Hume in more detail.

---

(1) George Berkeley, *Works*, ed. by Sampson, Vol. II, London, 1898, *De Motu*, § 17.

(2)   David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Everyman ed, London 1911, Bk I, Sect. I, pp. 13 - 4.

(3)   David Hume, *An Enquir concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Selby-Bigge, Oxford, 1902 Sect. II, p. 22.

Among other things Hume was interested in "the nature of that evidence which assures us of any real existence and matter of fact beyond the present testimony of our senses, or the records of our memory."[1]   He was therefore concerned to distinguish those statements that we *can* know to be true from those that we *cannot* know to be true; he was concerned with the distinction between true and false.   Fundamental to this distinction is the factor mentioned above, that an idea must correspond to some sense impression.   Hence a true idea would have a *meaning* because it would correspond to some impression.   Could a false idea have a meaning ?   This could happen, *e.g.* with the idea of a unicorn, for it built up out of impressions that can be experienced separately, but it is false because they do not occur together.   But Hume recognised another kind of false idea, those of metaphysics for example, which he regarded as containing nothing but sophistry and illusion.[2]   Now it did not occur to him to regard these not as false but as *unmeaning*, though it is difficult to doubt that he would have accepted this way of stating the matter if it had been put to him.   Such an idea we cannot know to be true; but equally we *cannot know it to be false*.   Implicit in Hume, then, or compatible with him, is the distinction between the meaningful, which can be true or false, and the meaningless, which can be neither true nor false; and this is precisely the standpoint that characterises Positivism.   But there is a difference : Hume would be concerned with the meaning or unmeaning of *ideas*; but Positivism is concerned with the meaning or unmeaning of *statements* as a whole, the usual practice, however, being to speak not of meaning and its opposite but of *significance* and *non-significance* of statements.   Thus a state-

(1) *Id.*, p. 26.
(2) *Id.*, Sect. XII, Pt. III, p. 165.

ment is significant if it is either true or false, and it is non-significant if it is neither true nor false. Now this tenet would be exactly the same as Hume's if, in order that a statement should be significant, each of its component ideas had to have a meaning; but Positivism does not make this restriction, and its criterion of significance is therefore wider than Hume's though this does not detract from his obvious influence upon the modern development. This development cannot be deduced from Hume's position, but it is compatible therewith and Hume would probably have accepted it. It is, moreover, just as whole - heartedly empirical, for it is derived from no other source than experience; Empiricism is simply wider than Hume conceived it to be.*

These, then, are the influences behind the principle of verifiability, which is the positivist criterion of significance.

It should be noted, however, that the school of logical positivists responsible for the doctrine, whatever methodological aim it had, was distinctly concerned to confute all transcendental philosophy, the philosophy that treats of what is beyond all experience; and the school used to this end the methodological principle of verification drawn from science. If this is not borne in mind, misunderstanding is apt to arise.

(*)   For a different view see W.T. State, "Positivism", *Mind*, N.S. Vol. LIII, No. 211, London 1944. Since the point in question is not a basic one, Professor Stace's opinion is not discussed explicitly.

CHAPTER V

The Criterion of Verifiability.

The original form of the principle may be expressed by saying that the meaning of a statement is the method of its verification or is determined by its verification[1]. This appears to imply that the meaning is contained in or conferred by the verification — and undoubtedly this was the interpretation adopted by some. Thus if a man says, "Jehovah is angry", he may, if pressed for verification, point out that there is violent thunder. The positivist now understands that "Jehovah is angry" means the same as "It is thundering". Thus the statement in question derives its meaning solely from its verification[2]. In this way transcendental meaning was disposed of, and the method would apply equally to philosophical statements such as "Time is unreal", "The soul is a simple substance", and the like. Has this, however, any methodological importance ? A parallel example can be drawn from archaeology, where Dr. Daniel uses this form of the principle to expose a fallacy. Suppose we dig and find a bronze axe, we appear to be giving information of archaeological importance if we say that it belongs to the Bronze Age; Dr. Daniel points out, however, that this "is almost saying no more than that it is made of bronze, which is perilously near saying nothing at all."[3] In the language of Positivism,

(1) Moritz Schlick, "Meaning and Verification", *Philosophical Review*, New York, Vol. XLV, No. 268, 1936, p. 341.

(2) A. J. Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic*, London, 1936, p. 176.

(3) G. E. Daniel, *The Three Ages : An Essay on Archaeological Method*, Cambridge, 1943, p. 40

the verification that the axe belongs to the Bronze Age is that it is made of bronze. Again, we all know the time-honoured example that the power opium has to induce sleep is explained by its soporific qualities. This form of the principle has little application in science, and it simply guards against the supposition that one has gained new scientific knowledge when one has in fact merely expressed what is already known in a new terminology.

Some logicians had difficulty in accepting this form of the principle, for two reasons : a statement made in the present is verified in the future, so that it appears to be meaningless until it is in fact verified; and what is here called verification seems to be no more than evidence for or against the truth of a statement whose meaning is already known. Thus with the statement, "There are mountains on the other side of the moon", we all know what this means though it has never in fact been verified, its meaning is not dependent on the future, and if we sought to verify it by looking at the other side of the moon we should obtain empirical evidence either for or against the statement, but we could not speak of finding evidence for a statement that had no meaning. Another way of putting the matter would be that the verification would be relevant to our knowledge of the truth but not to truth itself.

Now it would seem that both parties are right in what they assert, but that they err in making their assertion of universal application. The positivists would be right in supposing that the verification principle applied to a certain class of statements, and their critics would be right in supposing that to other statements the principle did not apply. Both parties were considering different kinds of statement, but this was not clearly realised.

Positivists met the objections, however, not by distinguish-

ing different types of statement, but by modifying their principle to one of *verifiability*, so that a statement, instead of being endowed with meaning by its verification, had a meaning if it was verifiable even though no verification had been carried out. This covers the example of mountains on the other side of the moon; and it would likewise cover statements about the past, such as "Caesar crossed the Rubicon". Thus, we know what the experience would be like of finding mountains on the other side of the moon or of finding Caesar crossing the Rubicon, and we know what the experience would be like of finding no mountains there or of finding Caesar unable to cross the river. But the procedure confuses different criteria under one heading, because "Jehovah is angry" requires the original form of the principle.

Positivists themselves noticed the next difficulty. With statements of natural or causal law, such as Charles's law or "Arsenic is poisonous", the confirmation could never be completed by a finite number of observations. It was therefore suggested that the criterion of significance should be the possibility of obtaining a single falsification. Thus, no matter how often we test arsenic and find it poisonous, we can never be sure this will prove true of the next test, so that confirmation can never be complete; but we know what sort of situation would confute the statement, even though this situation has never occurred.[1] This criterion seems not to have been acceptable, however. Thus Mr. Ayer, who denies it, seems to hold that we might make some mistake about the conditions to which the falsification was supposed to apply.[2] This reason would seem to be mistaken : for the whole matter is independent of errors of actual verification — the proposal

(1) Referred to, Ayer, *Op. cit.*, p. 25.
(2) *Id.*, p. 26.

that Mr. Ayer denies is concerned simply with falsifiability in principle.

However that may be, Mr. Ayer offers an alternative criterion. This consists of a distinction between "strong" and "weak" verification : a "strong" verification is complete, and a "weak" one incomplete. A statement would be susceptible of "weak" confirmation when observations could be made or imagined that would be *relevant* to its truth; "weak" confirmation would thus confer a measure of *probability* upon the truth of a statement.[1] Thus "Arsenic is poisonous" is "weakly" confirmed by any instance of death after the taking of the drug. An example of a statement capable of "strong" confirmation is "I am looking at a red patch of colour". This criterion has struck some logicians as being too vague to be serviceable; it seems to me, however, that it is chiefly open to the charge of being gravely misleading, for it confuses meaning with significance or the existence of meaning.

To make this matter clear, it is necessary to bring out the relation between meaning and significance more precisely than is usually done. Words have meanings and statements have meanings in a more or less similar way — such difference as there is has no bearing on the present point. Now if a statement has a meaning it must be either true or false and it is therefore significant. Is it, then, the same to say that a statement has a meaning as that a statement is significant ? The answer is in the affirmative. Is it, then, the same to speak of "the meaning of a statement" as of "the significance of a statement" ? The answer is in the negative; for the meaning of a statement is given simply by what the statement means, but the *significance* of a statement is that the statement

---

(1) *Id.*, p. 22; see also R. B. Braithwaite, "Propositions about Material Objects," *Proc. Arist. Soc.*, N.S. Vol. XXXVIII, London, 1937-8.

has a meaning, it refers to the *existence* of meaning and not to what the meaning is, or it tells us that the statement is either true or false. This distinction was slurred over by the original way of expressing the principle of verification, that the meaning of a statement was determined by the method of its verification, so that there was confusion between determining *what the meaning was* and determining *that the meaning existed.* It is probable that the confusion still persists, and that the criterion of "weak" confirmability has arisen from it. With this distinction in mind, it is evident that a statement purporting to express a natural law is completely verified, in the technical methodological sense, by a single confirmation; but it is verified in the methodological sense and not completely confirmed in the sense that no future falsification could occur; that is to say, its significance, *i.e.* the *existence* of its meaning, is completely confirmed, though its truth is but partially confirmed. Thus the notion of "weak" confirmation, though relevant to questions of probability and truth, has no bearing on the methodological question of significance; and to use it as a criteron would suggest that not only the truth but also the *significance* was *incomplete.*

An interesting proposal has been put forward by Professor Stace, who, though not a positivist, was trying to formulate the basic principle underlying Positivism. He offers a criterion, which he calls the Principle of Observable Kinds.

> A sentence, in order to be signifiicant, must assert or deny facts which are of a kind or class such that it is logically possible directly to observe some facts which are instances of that class or kind.[1]

Professor Stace intended this principle to be a single cri-

terion of significance for two kinds of statement, those to do with the past, and those expressing natural laws. It chief importance, however, lies in its being an alternative, in the field of natural laws, to the criterion of "strong" falsifibility rejected by Mr. Ayer and to the criterion of "weak" confirmability proposed by him. Here it holds out the promise of an attractively precise criterion.

Professor Stace's formulation is not, however, precise, because it contains a grammatical ambiguity concerning the idiomatic use of the word "kind". He wishes to say that a statement purporting to express *a natural law* is significant if this is of a kind that has observable instances, *i.e.* if it *is such that it* has observable instances; thus "Arsenic is poisonous" is significant if the general fact expressed has observable instances, *i.e.* if an instance of arsenic proving poisonous can be observed. And he wishes to say that a statement purporting to express *a fact about the past* is significant if this is of a kind, *i. e.* is *a member of a class, other members* of which are observable; thus "Caesar crossed the Rubicon" is significant if it stands for a member of a class, namely the class of people crossing rivers, some of whose other members, such as that expressed by "Eisenhower crossed the Rhine", are observable. The difference is between *having an observable instance* and *resembling an observable instance,* and it is too large a difference to warrant their both being placed under the same criterion — which it is possible to do only because of an idiomatic ambiguity.

The first part of Professor Stace's meaning which may be distinguished as the Principle of Observable Instances offers a criterion for natural law, which, on reflection, does not seem to be essentially different from that of "weak" confirmation, for when we inspect an example of "weak" confirmation is seems to come down to finding an instance of an observable kind. In that case, Professor Stace's suggestion says directly

what the other criterion merely implies, and it is capable of greater precision. Even if it is granted, however, that the two are essentially the same, when applied to causal or natural laws, a difference can be unearthed on certain philosophical grounds, but the discussion of this may be ostpponed. Strong falsification merely amounts to finding a contrary instance of an observable kind; it is therefore essentially the same as Professor Stace's proposal.

It is now necessary to consider the second part of Professor Stace's meaning. In the foregoing remarks, distinguishing the two parts of his meaning, no attempt was made to be precise with the use of the word "observable". Professor Stace is precise and takes it in the sense of what it is *logically possible* to observe. Now it is not logically possible to observe what is expressed by statements about the past; it therefore seems desirable to consider statements with reference to what it *is humanly possible* to observe, to what it could easily *become humanly possible* to observe, and to what it is *no longer humanly possible* to observe, illustrated respectively by "There is a book on my desk", "There are mountains on the other side of the moon", and "Caesar crossed the Rubicon". Professor Stace certainly intended his principle to apply not only to natural laws bsut to these three kinds of statement; and the question aries whether it does apply to these.

Take, first of all, statements that express what it is humanly possible to observe, such as "There is a book on my desk". This statement, from its very description, expresses what is of an observable kind. Thus "being of an observable kind" is a description, a predicate-label; and if we say that a statement of the kind in question conforms to the Principle of Observable Kinds we are asserting *a tautology* — unless we choose to say that the principle gives a definition of "significance". To put the matter otherwise : before trying to apply the prin-

ciple to a statement, we must know something about the statement, namely whether it stands for what is of a non-observable kind — so that its significance requires to be tested — or whether it stands for what is of a humanly observable kind — when *ipso facto* it requires no test. Thus to speak of a statement as directly verifiable or as expressing what is humanly observable is to mark it off as being of a certain kind. In one sense, then, "A statement is of an observable kind" means the same as "It expresses something it is humanly possible to observe." Further, unless there existed a fundamental kind of statement like this, we should be for ever testing statements for significance without having any kind of statement in terms of which to test them. We require this kind not to be subservient to any principle of significance, so that we may relate to this kind, in some way or other, statements of other kinds if they are to be regarded as significant.

With statements such as "There are mountains on the other side of the moon", it would be usual to say they are significant because verifiable in principle : it is easy to imagine an improvement in communications that would enable us to visit the moon and carry out the necessary observations. The question is, however, whether it is really necessary to have a criterion of significance for these, or whether they are simply of the same kind, *i.e.* resemble, those that express what it is humanly possible to observe. It seems to me plain that no criterion is needed, and that they are significant in the same sense as humanly observable ones. In other words, it is not necessary to say that in one sense "A statement is of an observable kind" means the same as "It belongs to a class some of whose other members express facts of an observable kind, *i.e.* some of whose other members express what it is humanly possible to observe." This will be argued more fully with the next kind and if the result is convincing there it will be convincing here.

Statements about the past offer the best ground for supposing that a criterion of significance for empirical statements can be needed. It is humanly impossible to verify by direct observation that Caesar crossed the Rubicon, and it is useless to hope for an improvement in communications with the past in the way we hope for improvements in accuracy of measurement instruments. Are we, then, to say that such statements are significant because they resemble others that are significant in the fundamental sense of expressing what is humanly observable ? I do not think so, for the following reasons. There might still be some one living who had seen Caesar cross the Rubicon and then the event would be of a humanly observed kind. It is unreasonable to say that the statement about Caesar requires a criterion of significance just because the Methuselah required suffered a premature death. If there were such a Methuselah we should have to take his word for it. But that is the common practice with statements that few people trouble to verify. If a scientist went to the moon, we should accept his verification concerning mountains. Further, a man accepts his own verification that he has previously made, without repeating it. A philosopher might interject that the man should really verify his remembered verification; but we are concerned with criteria of significance that are in fact to be distilled from usage and not with what they ought to be according to some rational standpoint. Otherwise a statement is significant only at the time it is verified, which would make the procedure impossible to apply, for it would be out of date and have to be repeated when it came to be applied. Again, if it is necessary to verify that a substance resulting from a chemical experiment is gold, the verification may consist not merely of a *single* observation but of several, which are necessarily successive and not at the same time. Hence if we realise that

direct observation is a more complex affair than might appear
at first (what has been observed, what is being observed, and
what would be observed with suitable aid), there is little like-
lihood of our continuing to treat statements about the past
as being on a different footing, from the point of view of sig-
nification, from those that express what is it humanly possible
to observe at any particular time.

An important consideration about the use of "observable"
concerns any of the above examples when they are in fact
false. Thus, when there is no book on my desk, the statement
"There is a book on my desk" is in fact false, and therefore
expresses what is in an obvious sense *un*observable. It might
therefore seem as though Professor Stace's Principle of Obser-
vable Kinds — as distinct from the Principle of Observable
Instances which has been separated from it above — were
required here, on the grounds that false statements, which
express what is unobservable, are significant because they
resemble true statements, which certainly express what is observ-
able. This would have awkward consequences :* among
other things it would conflict with the natural assertion that
if a true statement is significant then its denial is significant
in the same sense. But this assertion can be retained and
the need for a criterion of significance for false statements avoid-

(*) True and false statements would not have the same status,
since the significance of those that are false would be definable in terms of
the significance of those that are true; and therefore if "significant" is still
taken to be equivalent to "true or false" it would be defined by a pair of
alternatives of different logical levels. If this were accepted, the ensuing
discussion would proceed thus : true statements would be significant in the
most fundamental sense; false ones would be significant in a sense definable
in terms of this; "true or false" would then give the definition of another sense
of "significant" which in the context of scientific statements could be called
fundamental, and we could say that true or false statements were "observable"
in an arbitrary sense, convenient for the discussion of scientific statements.

ed by proceeding in the following way : Instead of describing as "observable" what is expressed by a true statement, we may describe as "observable" the *truth* of a true statement, and then we can equally well describe as "observable" the *falsity* of a false statement. Strictly, then, it will be necessary to speak not of a statement expressing a *fact* of an observable kind, but of the *truth* or *falsity* of a statement as being of an observable kind.

This strictness, however, would often lead to considerable clumsiness of expression; instead of this terminology, therefore, it will sometimes ease the phrasing to speak of a statement as being of a directly verifiable kind.

One small additional comment is desirable. Suppose a student is shown a piece of gold and is told that it is malleable. If he does not know what this means he may ask for its verification, whereupon the gold will be hammered flat without breaking. But there is no *principle* of verifiability involved here; the request for verification is no more than a request for an observable instance of an unfamiliar fact. But its being unfamiliar does not prevent it from being of an observable kind.

All three of the kinds of statement discussed above, whether true or false, will now be classed as one : their truth or falsity is of an observable kind, *i.e.* it would be possible to observe their truth or falsity either with the means at our disposal or by improvements in technique or by finding old enough people, though in practice the verification would probably prove beyond us. Thus all three kinds of statement are significant in a fundamental sense, and no principle of significance is applicable to them. This review of Professor Stace's principle amounts to the claim that it does not apply to the kinds of statement just considered, though it leads us to see that corresponding to the principle there is a predicate that

does apply to them; but the limitation just imposed upon it in no way detracts from its value as a criterion for statements of natural or causal law.

Now none of these approaches covers hypotheses, to which some verification-principle is essentially relevant. It must not be supposed, however, that the verification-mechanism involved here has been overlooked by positivists. One essential point in it is prediction by deduction followed by observation, and this has been given by Mr. Ayer as follows :—

> It is the mark of a genuine factual proposition, not that it should be equivalent to an experiental proposition, or any finite number of experiental propositions, but simply that some experiental propositions can be deduced from it in conjunction with certain other premises without being deducible from those other premises alone. [1]

This, however, unduly narrows the field of statements that can be admitted as significant, because of the failure to distinguish different kinds of statement. Likewise Professor Stace, when giving a precise statement of this criterion, misled by positivist writing, also narrowed its field unduly :—

> A set of words purporting to express a factual proposition P is significant only it it is possible to deduce or infer from it, in combination if necessary with other premises, some proposition or propositions (at least one) Q_1, Q_2, Q_3, ... etc., the truth or falsity of which it would be logically possible to verify by direct observation. [2]

Both formulations are too narrow because they fail to cover the example of gravitation and the like; the phrase "factual proposition" would have to be replaced by "scientific hypothesis". For the sake of accuracy, moreover, it would be desirable to add that the additional premises mentioned must be directly verifiable or have truth or falsity of an observable kind. For completeness, it may be noted that the Q's need not

---

(1) Ayer, *Op. cit.*, p. 26.   (2) Stace, *Op. cit.*, p. 215.

be restricted to being of a directly verifiable kind but could be of the natural-law type subject to the Principle of Observable Instances — though it would not be illogical to omit this addendum, for with sufficient additional premisses we could by-pass the natural law and step straight to directly verifiable Q. In spite of the narrow formulation of the criterion, however, hypothetical entities have not been overlooked by positivists : thus Mr. Ayer refers to the electron.[1] According to the present discussion he is inconsistent in admitting that statements about them can be significant, while finding no place for them in his formulated criterion. Though this may have been an oversight, it is more likely that it is due to another positivist doctrine, which will be discussed below. This is the doctrine of phenomenalism in the field of perception and it would render his formulation consistent, but it would do so, not by making electrons of the same sort as chairs *i.e.* observable, but by making chairs of the same sort as electrons, *i.e.* hypotheses — phenomenalism when applied to perception gives all commonsense entities, apart from colour-patches and the like, the status of scientific hypotheses.

Now it might be questioned if the gravition-statement should be subject to a different principle from the Jehovah-statement, for there are certain similarities between them. Thus they both involve concepts that are hypotheses, which do not stand for perceptual entities. Again, just as no meaning is attached to "Jehovah is angry" apart from its verification, so with gravitation we cannot attach any meaning to it until it has been verified. Nonetheless their differences are more important than their likeness. With the Jehovah-example the verification is one of immediacy, whereas with that of gravitation it is mediated by deduction. Further the one is

(1) Ayer, *Op. cit.*, p. 215.

categorical in form while the other is hypothetical, in the senses terms have when applied to propositions in formal logic. An important difference is that the one may be completely verified, whereas the other cannot. Again there is no intelligible connexion between the Jehovah-statement and its verification, while with gravitation, though we could not say without investigation whether or not there was such a connexion, there is at least the possibility of one. The first three of these four points amount to the same thing and perhaps the fourth does so too. The general point may be re-expressed in an expanded form in this way. With the Jehovah-statement, verification *confers* meaning upon it. With the gravitation-statement, however, verification confirms only significance or the *existence* of meaning and does not prescribe what that meaning is : for its verification consists in statements about the future, but, after the occasion of its first verification, it may be said to have a meaning, because, though its verification may continue, its verifiability has been accomplished. Thus it seems preferable to say not that its meaning lies in future verification but that the existence of its meaning is guaranteed by its having proved amenable to empirical testing. Another way of expressing this is the following. The positivist treatment of the Jehovah-statement makes it *synonymous* with its verification-statement; we have two sets of words having the same use; and there is no value in using the one instead of the other — in fact the Jehovah-statement is not synonymous with any of its verification-statements. Hence the two kinds of statement are to be placed in different categories.

This whole approach, however, many appear unsatisfactory. The reader will notice that the comparison made is between a statement of scientific hypothesis supposed to be true and a metaphysical statement supposed by positivists either to be meaningless or to have the meaning prescribed

by its verification. This may be misleading. However I have merely been adopting the type of example used by writers on the subject. It might seem fairer, or at any rate clearer, to compare the Jehovah-statement with a scientific one that is false or meaningless, or to compare the gravitation-statement with one resembling the Jehovah-example but nevertheless true. This will now be attempted. Compare first the Jehovah-example with the hypothesis of the aether. From this hypothesis we deduce mathematically the prediction that the time taken by light to travel along the aether-stream is greater then that taken to travel for the same distance across it. When we verify the prediction, however, we find that the two times are the same, *i.e.* the prediction is false. Hence the hypothesis of the aether is, in a definable sense, false; but, because it is related by the same deductive mechanism to the possibility of verification, it is significant and has the same status as that of gravitation — the only difference is that the one is falsified while the other was confirmed. In all this there is nothing new to warrant our rescinding the distinction previously made between the Jehovah-statement and that of gravitation, for with the former there is no deductive - prediction mechanism in the verification. If we wish to effect the comparison with a meaningless scientific statement, we shall quickly realise that a meaningless statement could not be operated upon by the deduction-mechanism, or rather that a hypothesis is conceived in terms of this mechanism and *ipso facto* cannot be non-significant, so that the comparison could not be made.

Let the attempt therefore be made to compare the gravitation-statement with some scientific equivalent of the Jehovah-example. An exact parallel can probably not be found, for the Jehovah-statement is assumed to be meaningless or to have the meaningful sense given to it by its verification,

while "Opium induces sleep because of its soporific quality" is a tautology. Let us consider this, however, or the simpler one, "whiskey makes one drunk because of its intoxicating quality", which is equally a tautology. This closely resembles but importantly differs from "Whiskey makes one drunk because to a certain degree it anaesthetises the highest nerve-centre", which expresses simply an application of the causal law given by "Intoxication is caused by anaesthesia to a certain degree of the highest nerve-centre". Hence if we wish to compare the opium-example with any other it should be compared with a *natural* or *causal law* rather than with a hypothesis. It is evident, then, that a statement like the opium-example masquerades as a natural or causal law, while actually it is a tautology. If we seek to verify it, we begin by asking for an instance of the soporific quality's inducing sleep, and our attention is directed to the occurrence of sleep. We thus find that the soporific quality is not a characteristic that can be described otherwise than by its sleep-inducing effect. Since we do not obtain an instance of a causal law, we realise we have been testing not a causal law but a tautology. Are we now to say that the opium-statement is subject to a different criterion of verifiability from that governing natural or causal laws, or are we to say that it is subject to the same principle but just fails to be verified, *i.e.* that neither it nor its denial expresses anything that has an observable instance ? Plainly the latter is correct : we apply the Principle of Observable Instances and get a negative answer. A general enquiry about significance, therefore, comes to this : we seek an observable instance and get none; we seek a verifiable prediction based on deduction and get none; hence the statement investigated is not a scientific one. The same question must now be asked about the Jehovah-exemple. Is it, like the opium-statement, subject to the Principle of Observable Instances ?

It differs from the opium statement in being particular and therefore it does not masquerade as a statement of natural or causal law, and in not being a tautology. The first of these points is not important, for it is easy to find metaphysical statements that wear the same clothing of generality as those of natural or causal law, *e.g.* "Relations modify the terms they relate."

Instances of what this states are not of a directly verifiable kind and no prediction of a directly verifiable kind can be deduced from it. It is therefore not a scientific statement. Again there is nothing to suggest that a different criterion of significance is required. But the statement about relations is not a tautology and therefore it differs from the opium-example. Further since this statement has no verification whatever, it differs from the Jehovah-example which is verified by "It is thundering". But it should be noted that the Jehovah-example is not a proper illustration of a metaphysical statement at all, and therefore it need not be considered further. In spite of this, however, it is just as suitable as a proper metaphysical statement for establishing that these are not of the same kind as statements of hypotheses. From all this we conclude that metaphysical statements do not require a new criterion of significance, other than the two required by science, but that they are not of the same kind as scientific statements.

It is desirable at this point to summarise the position.

(I) Some statements are directly verifiable, *i.e.* their truth or falsity is of an observable kind. Here we have a defining characteristic of a certain class of statements. They are significant in a fundamental sense and no principle of significance is required. Illustrations :— "There is a book on my desk"; "There are mountains on the other side of the moon"; "Caesar crossed the Rubicon".

(II) Other statements (which when true express natural or causal laws) are significant in a derivative sense definable in terms of the fundamental sense of "significance" given in (I). This derivative sense may be determined as follows :

(*a*) Statements are significant if they satisfy the Principle of Observable Instances : that is to say, such a statement is significant if it stands for an infinite number of particular statements that are directly verifiable or significant in the fundamental sense of (I).

(*b*) The alternative Principle of Weak Confirmability may be preferred by some.

(*c*) The alternative Principle of Strong Falsification may be preferred by others.

Illustrations : — "Arsenic is poisonous"; the Boyle-Mariotte law.

(III) Certain general statements, which neither are directly verifiable nor satisfy the Principle of Observable Instances, express hypotheses, which are indirectly verified by the method of deduction-prediction-observation or deduction of natural law. Here again the sense of "significance" is derivative and definable in terms either of that given in (I) or of that given in (II). The criterion involved may be called the Principle of Verifiability by Deduction, and expressed thus : a statement is a significant statement of hypothesis, if from it in conjunction with other statements that are directly verifiable it is possible to deduce either a statement that is directly verifiable or else a statement that satisfies the Principle of Observable Instances. Illustrations :— Newton's Theory of Universal Gravitation; Newton's Second Law of Motion; "The velocity of light travelling through the aether depends upon the velocity of the aether."

This is a classification of three classes of statements required by scientific methodology. A fourth class remains :—

(IV) There are statements some of which resemble those of the above three classes; some may resemble those of one only, others those of more than one of these classes. That is to say, from their grammatical form they appear to express a categorical fact, a natural law, or a scientific hypothesis; but, on attempting to verify them, we find that they neither are of a directly verifiable kind, nor satisfy the Principle of Observable Instances, nor satisfy that of Verifiability by Deduction. They constitute the class of metaphysical statements, and no new principle of verification is applicable to them — they simply fail to conform to the above methodological standards.

A few comments will not be out of place.

It is worth stressing that the hypothesis concerning the aether is a *false hypothesis*, in a definable sense, and not merely the content of a meaningless, non-significant, or transcendental statement. One might make a mistake on this point because, looked at casually, the aether cannot be related to any perceptual experience. But this form of expression, though common enough and convenient, is no more than a summary of the criterion of significance, and it slurs over a vital point. From the aether-statement we can deduce and predict a perception that *would be experienced if the aether-statement were true* — in other words the statement is the sort of thing that could quite well be true — but with a transcendental statement it is not that we deduce and predict a perception that disappoints us but that there *is no way of deducing a perceptual situation at all.* There is, therefore, a danger in using the short phrase that a term is without significance because it *cannot be used;* for the way in which the aether cannot be used (or related to experience) is different from that in which the transcendental is unserviceable. We explicitly make a distinction between a statement of a false hypothesis and a statement

without significance. Positivists give the impression that they would not accept this; but they do not appear to have considered the point, and if they were to give it their attention, they would perhaps accept it.

A comment of some importance is that the meaning of "significant", other than the fundamental sense of "true or false" (or "observable"), does not mean the same as "true or false" even in a derivative sense; for though the gravitation-statement, for instance, is verified by being brought into relation with observation, actual confirmation gives it not truth but probability. It may be convenient for shortness in some contexts to say that "significant" is equivalent to "true or false", but this is not absolutely accurate.

A final comment concerns the status of this criterion, whether it is empirical, *a priori*, or something else. The answer to this is, perhaps, a matter of approach. If a philosopher introduces the principle in order to dispel metaphysics, he is probably using it as an arbitrary definition of "significance"; but, if a scientist arrives at it from an examination of scientific practice, then it is an empirical generalisation or a confirmed hypothesis. However it does not remain with this status, for, after he has seen that it is widely operative he begins to realise that it is in fact a characteristic feature of scientific practice. Its status then becomes, if we like, *a priori*, or a definition of what is meant by a scientific statement; it gives the common and peculiar characteristic that distinguishes scientific statements from others. This conclusion is in no way incompatible with the empirical status the principle has when it is in the preliminary stages of examination.

How far would positivists admit the distinctions drawn? Two principles of verifiability have been distinguished, and positivists hold that only one is needed. They have given

different formulations, it is true, but only because they sought to improve their principle; they hold that there is but one principle and that their task is to find out exactly what that is.

The deducibility-criterion of (III) is the one they would now favour; hence the question arises whether this can cover the statements of (II). Positivists would claim that a natural or causal law was a hypothesis in the present sense, because in conjunction with fact of an observable kind it would lead by deduction to a prediction that was directly verifiable. Thus the law that arsenic is poisonous may be combined with the premiss that the substance we have before us in this bottle is arsenic and with the premiss that it is swallowed by some animal; from this is deduced the prediction that the animal will soon die, and this conclusion is verifiable.

Undoubtedly the procedure can be given a deductive form; and this certainly shows that is has something in common with the treatment accorded to the gravitation-example — with both, their significance lies in the possibility of relating them to perceptual experience. But to put the stress on the deductive element would slur over the difference between the two kinds of statement : the one stands for an infinite number of statements of a directly verifiable kind while the other does not.

The issue may be resolved in the following way. The positivist may be invited to concede that there is an essential difference between the two kinds of statement, which it is important to keep in view. On the other hand, I should concede that the two corresponding criteria of significance are *not essentially* different, on the grounds that the Principle of Observable Instances is *a particular case* of the Principle of Verifiability by Deduction. Thus, that of Observable Instances would not apply to the gravitation-example; but that of Verifiability by Deduction would apply to the arsenic-

example, though this Principle *would then be equivalent* to that of Observable Instances. From the methodological point of view, it is worth preserving two separate formulations of principle with two separate names, to enable us to keep in mind the difference between natural and scientific law. From the point of veiw of general clarity, discussion of the theory of verifiability has been unnecessarily confused by failure to notice the difference. Positivists, however, would refuse to recognise the difference for a wholly different reason, and to this attention must now be devoted.

Positivists would deny that a natural law had instances expressed by statements of a directly verifiable kind : they would hold that arsenic was just as unobservable as gravitation. On account of the reason for this, they would hold that the statements of (I) were significant not in a fundamental sense but in a derivative one requiring a criterion; they would also deny the Principle of Observable Instances and deny its equivalence with the Principle of Weak Confirmability. This reason constitutes an important part of the thesis of Positivism. According to the present view, it is an *additional* part of their thesis and an *application* of the principle of verifiability; and, moreover, one that could be rejected without rejecting that principle. But they would hold that it was a *consequence* of the verifiability-criterion.

What is referred to is *the phenomenalist thesis of perception.*[1] Positivists would hold that the statements of (I) were not of directly verifiable kind, and that therefore they were in need of verification in the same way as those of natural or scientific law. With a statement such as "I am seeing a book", they would demand verification. This consists in part of the state-

---

(1)　See A. J. Ayer, *The Foundations of Empirical Knowledge*, London, 1940, pp. 229 - 43.

ment "I am seeing a patch of colour", technically expressed by "I am seeing a certain sense-datum". The rest of the verification involves the deduction-mechanism of the general criterion, and it is given by statements to the effect that if I were to move my position I should see another sense-datum related characteristically to the one I am now seeing; the characteristic relation has to do with continuity, that is to say, there would be a more or less continuous transition between the first sense-datum seen and the last, which could be verified by observing not only the sense-data before and after moving but also those to be observed while moving. An important point to notice about the verification is that it contains no reference to the book; it consists entirely of statements about sense-data and the relations that hold between them. Hence it is not permissible to hold that the book "literally" exists any more than gravitation : for, just as the verification contains no reference to an instance of gravitation, so that of the book contains no reference to any particular book.

It would seem that positivists have used the scientific principle of verifiability in a field outside the domain of science in such a way as to construct a metaphysic of sense - data, although it was to counter metaphysics that in the first place they adopted the scientific criterion.

From the methodological standpoint, however, there is no need to discuss this philosophical thesis. For methodology, the prime requirement is to ascertain the criterion to be found in scientific practice together with its application; and the application of verifying natural objects, like books, in terms of sense-data does not occur in science.

The reason for noticing the phenomenalist thesis is that it would deny the equivalence of the Principle of Observable Instances with that of Weak Confirmability. In fact the latter criterion was proposed not only to cover the arsenic-example,

which cannot be completely verified, but also statements such as that about the book, which it will be observed are also *incapable of complete verification.*[1]   Hence the Principle of Weak Confirmability can have a wider field of application then that of Observable Instances.   However, if the phenomenalist thesis of perception is not admitted, the fields are the same.

With regard to the scientific outlook, for positivists it consists of the need to relate all statements to sense-data; here, however, we will confine ourselves to the outlook that is to be found animating scientific practice.

It was mentioned above that the scholastic dictum, "*Nihil est in intellectu quod non prius fuerit in sensu*", was too narrow; that it was in fact equivalent to Hume's criterion that for a word to have meaning it must denote something.   It is now clear exactly why it is too narrow : there is nothing denoted by the word "gravitation", and gravitation can be in the intellect even though it cannot be sensed.   The scientific outlook maintains that a concept must be capable of being related to perception, *directly* or *indirectly* : it is now clear what is the precise way in which a concept is *indirectly* related to perception —it is by the mechanism of verifiability by deduction. We may also say that Ockham's razor expresses this : entities that cannot be related to perception even indirectly are not to be introduced unnecessarily. And Newton's "*Hypotheses non fingo*" has the same import.

The scientific outlook, then, is expressed in the Principle of Verifiability by Deduction.

From the philosophical point of view it will be convenient to make a distinction within the general criterion according to the material to which it is applied : in the sphere of science

(1)   *Id.*, pp. 239 - 40.

let it be Verifiability; in that of philosophy let it be Verification. The former is a sound methodological principle . The latter may be pseudo; at all events it characterises the activity of logical positivists and some logical analysts.

The verification principle is commonly applied, among other things, to the question whether statements about the past, about parts of the universe that we cannot now observe, and about similar sorts of situations are significant or are Non-Sense (it was maintained above that this was not a fruitful form of question). It is also applied to such statements as "Jehovah is angry" or "Time is unreal".

It is worth mentioning that, apart altogether from the application of Verifiability by Deduction, a distinction should be made between statements that are capable of being understood prior to verification and those that are not; again, apart from the scientific application, the difficulties internal to the groups of positivists are probably due to failure to draw this distinction. With statements that can be understood independently of verification, to say that the verification provides the meaning is to confuse the meaning of a statement with the evidence for its truth. Thus "A is brother of B" has a meaning before we ascertain whether A is male and whether A has a parent that B has — ascertaining this is simply a check on truth. Similarly statements about the past and so on have a meaning; and this might not have been questioned by positivists if they had kept the distinction in question clearly before them. It would seem, then, that the essence of the verification principle amounts to an attack on such statements as those about Jehovah and time, which are *not* understood prior to verification. In this form the principle may be expressed thus: — A statement of a certain class, if it can be empirically tested, means only so much as is contained in the test. A corollary is :— If a statement cannot be empirically tested it is NonSense.

CHAPTER VI

The Denial of Subject-Predicate Logic, Logical Constructions.

Implicit in all these developments of logical analysis is the denial of the Traditional Logic of Aristotle — in particular the denial of the view that all statements are of subject-predicate form. This theme, because it has had an incalculable effect upon logic and because it is one way of approaching logical constructions — one of the most striking fields of logical analysis, deserves a chapter to itself.

Aristotle believed that all propositions could be analysed into the form *S is P* — which may be conveniently referred to as "SP". This belief is based on the assumption that "S" is a name that stands for S, and "P" a name for P. Thus the supposition amounts to this, that there are two things or substances, S and P and that they are linked by the copula "is". In "Socrates is a Greek", for example, the word "Socrates" was a name for Socrates and "Greek" a name for Greeks, and the statements was held to mean that Socrates was included among the class of Greeks.

Now Aristotle was right in thinking that some propositions were of this form, but wrong in thinking that *all* were. It will now be necessary to see to what paradoxical consequences this exaggeration leads.

If the statement "No square circles exist" be analysed into SP it might run : "No square circles are among the things in the universe". The subject is *square circles*, and in the statement "square circles" is a phrase standing for square circles; but there are no such entities.

Two possibilities are then open to the logician. The first was taken by Meinong, who suggested that there must be some sort of square circles for which the phrase "square circles" stood. He attributed to this sort of square circle what Professor Ryle calls a "funny sort of Being", and they existed in a special realm of existents. Thus, according to the logical analyst, are born the flights of metaphysical fancy; much easier than to seek an error and a logical correction. The difficult path was taken by Mr. Russell, who took the line that such a quaint result indicated a flaw in the analysis. By giving up the SP analysis of propositions, he avoided placing square circles in a realm with a funny sort of Being. His analysis would run : "There is nothing that has both the property of being square and the property of being circular" or "The property of being square and the property of being circular belong to nothing"— in other words *square* and *circular* are incompatible properties. By separating the *square* and the *circular* it becomes evident that there is no need to posit square circles of some sort, because the phrase "square cirles" can be got rid of : hence the SP form which requires that square circles of some sort should exist must be rejected.

Now in the first form of Mr. Russell's analysis, "Nothing both has the property of being square and the property of being circular", another paradox arises if this is supposed to be in SP form; for "Nothing" will be a name for something! If this is true Lewis Carroll's naive argument becomes correct :

The messenger : "I am sure nobody walks much faster than I do."

The king : "He can't do that, or else he'd have been here first."

Thus "Something is a Greek" may be of SP form, but "Nothing is a square circle" cannot be. This might be summarised by saying that *nothing is not the limiting case of something,*

obtained by making the something continuously diminish.

Similarly "Mr. Pickwick is a fiction" is not of SP form even if "Mr. Russell is real" is : for if "Mr. Pickwick" is a name for someone Mr. Pickwick is not a fiction. The objection to this view that is, no doubt, sometimes felt is that the proposition *Mr. Pickwick is a fiction* is *about* Mr. Pickwick, and it cannot be *about* him if he does not in some sense exist for the propostion to be *about*. The answer to this objection is that it is valid in so far as it says that Mr. Pickwick is a fiction" is *about* Mr. Pickwick; but the rest does not follow, because the proposition is *about* Mr. Pickwick in a different sense of "about" from the sense in which *Mr. Russell is real* is *about* Mr. Russell.[1] In the latter case it does follow that Mr. Russell exists; but the usage of "about" with regard to fictions is quite different. The proof of this lies in the paradoxial consequence of denying it — the paradox *requires* us to distinguish usages of a word.

These examples are introductory to what follows. All that has been aimed at is merely to draw attention to some elementary errors that result from supposing the SP form to be universal. What I wish to lead up to is the theory of descriptions, which is due to Mr. Russell.[2] It rests completely on the denial of the view the SP form is the only form of statement, and it has a close bearing on NonSense.

The central statement to be analysed and discussed is "The author of *Waverley* exists." By now the possibility will be readily entertained that "The author of *Waverley*" is not a name for somebody as it would have to be on Aristotle's view. The truth of this possibility may be demonstrated in a striking way as follows. If "The author of *Waverley*" is a name for

(1) See G. Ryle, "About", *Analysis*, vol. I. Oxford, 1933 - 4.

(2) Bertrand Russell, *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy*, London, pp. 167 ff., esp. p. 177. 1920,

someone, then "The author of Waverley is Scott" means the same as "Someone (to whom we refer as 'The author of *Waverley*')' is Scott': but also on this assumption it will be the case that "The author of *Waverley*" is a name for Scott, if it is a name for anyone. Hence it follows that "The author of *Waverley* is Scott" means the same as "Scott (to whom we refer as 'The author of *Waverley*') is Scott". If it is agreed that these two propositions could not possibly be equivalent, then the assumption that "The author of *Waverley*" is a name for Scott is false.

The analysis of "The author of *Waverley* exists" is not of the form that someone (for whom "The author of *Waverley*" is a name) is among the things in the universe, but that "one man wrote *Waverley* and only one man wrote *Waverley*".

Thus the phrase "The author of Waverley" disappears. This is the quintessential fact underlying Mr. Russell's theory of descriptions. "The author of *Waverley*" is a *description* or a *descriptive phrase* which, however, does not *describe* anything*·

(*) Strictly speaking this argument could only show that "The author of *Waverley*" as used in "The author of *Waverley* is Scotch" is not a name for Scott, but not as used in "The author of *Waverley* exists". The difference between the forms of the two propositions here involved will be treated in the text.

(**) I would be far from asserting that it could not be used to describe, say, Scott, as for instance in "The author of *Waverley* is Scott". But in neither "The author is Scotch" nor in "The author of *Waverley* exists" does "The author of *Waverley*" *describe* Scott. Is there anything else it might describe? "The author of *Waverley* is Scotch" means the same as "One man wrote *Waverley*, only one man wrote *Waverley*, and if anyone wrote it he was Scotch". What element could have been described by "The author of *Waverley*" ? Not *Waverley*, not Scotch, not wrote. Does it describe the man who wrote *Waverley* ? This is more plausible; but the man is the same as the author of *Waverley* and we are in the position of saying that "The author of *Waverley*" describes the author of *Waverley*. Very well; if we like to admit this no harm is done, but no important information emerges; for as was shown above the author of *Waverley* is not an object among the things of the universe.

Hence it appears that when we say "The author of *Waverley*" describes nothing, what is meant is that it describes nothing among the things in the universe. If we like to say that the author of *Waverley* is a *pseudo-object*, since it often appears to be like an object in the universe, as Traditional Logicians thought, then we may also say if we like that "The author of *Waverley*" describes a pseudo-object, namely, the author of *Waverley*. The fact that the author of *Waverley is* a pseudo-object is obvious from the fact that every statement containing "The author of *Waverley*" can be replaced — as above — by a statement that has exactly the same meaning without containing "The author of *Waverley*"; *for if not, our shortening of sentences for practical reasons would* ipso facto *have added to the number of things in the universe.*

Thus once more the denial of the traditional forms enables us to avoid a traditional error, and we may say that it was to circumvent this error that the theory of descriptions was invented. Now *within* this theory a further distinction must be drawn. It has already been hinted that there is an important difference between the analyses of "The author of *Waverley* is Scotch" and of "The author of *Waverley* exists". In the former case part of the statement, "The author of *Waverley* is Scotch", remains in the translation giving the analysis, namely, the pair of words "is Scotch", as will be seen on consulting the analysis stated above; but, in the case of "The author of *Waverley* exists", *no* part of the sentence reappears in the translation giving the analysis, as can likewise be seen by a glance at the analysis. In *both* cases "The author of *Waverley*" disappears on translation. In the former case "is Scotch" remains, but in the latter even "exists" disappears. The latter is the important case for the purposes of this exposition. In this, the two parts of the sentence which disappear on translation may

be called "incomplete symbols".*

"Incomplete symbol", it should be noted, is a much wider expression than the phrase "definite description" on which it is based; for of the sentences that contain incomplete symbols, *i.e.* no part of which reappears in the translation, only a few are descriptions: in other words, descriptions are only *some* of the many phrases which disappear on translation. It will be necessary to consider examples of expressions that are incomplete symbols but not descriptions.

A suitable example is "England is a monarchy".[1] Now England in such a context has something to do with Englishman — it might even be supposed that "England" meant the same as "Every Englishman". Such would be called a class-view — the whole, England, would be the totality of its parts, Englishmen; but if this is true, then "England is a monarchy" must be equivalent to "Englishman is a monarchy" which is nonsense. We suspect that those philosophers that believed that the whole was somehow "more than" the sum of its parts were in some degree correct — they were correct at any rate so far as they were denying the class view. But what alternative can be found ? It is tempting to follow the older thinkers who would have said that the whole was a *philosophic unity* of its parts. Unfortunately no one knows what a philosophic unity is : but fortunately it is not needed,

(*) Mr Russell called "The author of *Waverley*" an incomplete symbol" in both cases, because it disappeared on translation, He did not realise, as has been pointed out by Professor Moore, that there are then two kinds of incomplete symbols according as the rest of the sentence does not (*e.g.* "is Scotch") or does (*e.g.* "exists") disappear on translation. For the purposes of this chapter it will be convenient to use the phrase "incomplete symbol" only is the second sense.

(1) This illustration and the analysis of it I take from John Wisdom, "Ostentation", *Psyche*, Vol. XIII, London, 1933, pp. 175 - 6, and "Logical Constructions (V)" *Mind,* N.S. Vol. XLII, No. 166, London, 1933, pp. 197-8.

since a different line of attack is possible.

Instead of trying to replace "England" by "Englishmen" or some definition, a solution can be obtained when once it is realised that "England" is an incomplete symbol, and consequently has no definition, *i.e.* cannot be replaced by an exactly equivalent phrase. What can be done is to replace the entire sentence "England is a monarchy" by another without loss or gain of meaning, where this translation is to contain a set of phrases about Englishmen and their relations (possibly of a constitutional and geographical character) to one another. Thus "England" being an incomplete symbol is to disappear on translation of "England is a monarchy"— but so must "is a monarchy". By this means we avoid what appeared to be the initial contradiction that "England is a monarchy" was about Englishmen and yet it was impossible to say of Englishmen what we said of England—the attempt to do so producing the NonSense statement "Englishmen is a monarchy". The conclusion is that in saying something about England, namely that it is a monarchy, though we are saying something about Englishmen, we are not restricted to saying *exactly the same thing* of them as we did of England. The sort of change required when "England" is replaced by "Englishmen" is to replace "is a monarchy" by "*acknowledge a monarch.*" This statement (assuming it satisfactory) is not about England but about Englishmen, and the word "acknowledge" is so used as to embrace the statements needed concerning the mutual relations between Englishmen. "England" is an incomplete symbol and so is "is a monarchy".

Instead of incomplete symbols we may use *logical constructions*, which are simply what incomplete symbols *denote*. Thus England and monarchy are incomplete symbols. Clearly a logical construction is not part of the ultimate furniture of the earth. Either concept may be used.

A similar kind of analysis shows that "A nation" or "Some nations" and so on are incomplete symbols. Thus "Some nations invaded France and some did not" may be translated by "There were groups of people each with common ancestors, traditions and governors such that the members of some groups selected from among themselves soldiers and these soldiers forcibly entered the land owned by Frenchmen".[1]

From these examples we learn that we must not hypostatise *The author of Waverley* or *England* into pseudo-objects. To do so, and to base arguments on the supposition that we may, will inevitably produce NonSense. Now it is quite evident that if we are to retain the SP form we must hypostatise. And therefore the denial of the SP form is yet another way of approaching the conception of NonSense. Points that emerge are :—

(1) We have to avoid framing speculative statements which rest on hypostatised entities; and the question is, apart from the analyses given above, how are we to guard against this and to show clearly how the mistake may occur ? Probably the best thing to do is to use the formal mode of speech.

"The author of *Waverley* exists" entails "The author of *Waverley* is a person". This appears to be a real-object sentence; but that it is actually a statement in the material mode of speech or a pseudo-object statement is evident from the fact that we can translate it by the linguistic statement, "The author of *Waverley* is not a person-*designation* but a person-*description*". Similarly "England is a monarchy" entails "England is a nation", which may be translated by "England is not a nation-designation but an incomplete symbol"

(2) Though logical analysis springs from *definition*, it does not end there; for the logic of incomplete symbols shows that

---

(1) See John Wisdom, the Aristotelian Society's Supplementary Volume, No. XIII, London, 1934, p. 76.

they cannot be given an analytic or conventional definition. Only when employed in a stated usage, can meaning be attached to them; but meaning can strictly be attached only to a statement as a whole and not to that part of it separately which is an incomplete symbol. Thus we cannot give a conventional definition of "The author of *Waverley*" in "The author of *Waverley* exists" but only give one — *i.e.* an analysis — of the *whole* statement. In this way the original form of exposition which stresses meaning and says "W *means* so and so" must give way in the more general case of incomplete symbols to the linguistic form, "This statement means the same as that one"; and the meaning-approach tends to pass into the linguistic approach.

(3) The theory of incomplete symbols has an important bearing on the analysis of perceptual statements, such as "I see a table"; for it becomes possible to hold that "table" is not definable — no one has given an analytic definition of it. The conclusion is that the word "table" is an incomplete symbol. This gives logical analysts an additional ground for holding what is called the Phenomenalist Analysis of perception, and indeed the strength of this analysis over the Naive-Realist and Transcendental-Realist analyses lies in its being a derivative of logical analysis rather than in its being an independent result from the study of perception. In this way, logical analysis is held to assist such problems as sense-perception.

A final question must now be asked. The purpose of these chapters has been to discuss logical analysis, its nature, function, consequences, and (chiefly) negative aim; in general, its nature is to effect translations of statements, its function is to give meanings and their criteria, and its consequences are to stress commonsense and reveal the NonSense in speculation, which is also its negative aim. But has it a positive objective ?

Logical analysts have written little on this subject. Professor Wittgenstein's original proposal was that the purpose was to picture facts.[1] Mr. John Wisdom developed this idea into the thesis that logical analysis gave *insight into the structure of facts*.[2] Such positive proposals were scarcely written about or discussed and were soon discarded. The most important claim made is due to Professor Carnap.[3] He is concerned not with the structure of facts but with the logical structure of language. His view may be introduced as follows. Language has, as has been shown, a logical structure and significant statements must be framed in accordance with its rules, which are revealed by logical analysis. Thus when a philosopher says he knows what the statement "I am seeing an inkstand" means but does not know its analysis, he is saying that he does not know the logical structure of the language used in the statement. Once logical analyses have been obtained, however, so that the structure of the language is known, it would be possible (here Professor Carnap's thesis begins) to have one universal language for all scientific and commonsense knowledge, for the languages of the several sciences and commonsense would be intertranslatable. The rest of what he calls the "thesis of physicalism" is a piece of out-and-out behaviourist psychology, based not upon the evidence for that psychology against others but upon the demand for verifiability pushed to an extreme degree. Thus we may not say

---

(I) Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico - Philosophicus*, London, 1922, 2.1-2.225.

(2) John Wisdom, "Logical Constructions (V)", *Mind*, N.S. Vol. XIII, No. 166, London, 1933, p. 195.

(3) Rudolf Carnap, *The Unity of Science*, London, 1934, pp. 93 - 101; *Philosophy and Logical Syntax*, London, 1935, pp. 88 - 97; and *The Logical Syntax of Language*, London, 1937, pp. 320 - 2.

"He has a toothache", for we cannot verify another man's pain; we can say only "He is holding his jaw and is writhing" or something of that kind. To Professor Carnap the statement "He has a toothache" is as speculative as "Time is unreal" and the like. This thesis has found a certain amount of favour, but there has been a growing tendency to reject it; thus it has recently been criticised by Mr. Ayer,[1] who gives the impression that he once held it.

It would seem that the Wittgenstein-Wisdom proposal is fundamentally speculative; at all events no verification has been offered to show that statements can indicate the structure of facts; and in all probability its authors would now agree with this. It is also difficult to avoid the conclusion that physicalism is equally speculative due to a pronounced attitude of repudiation of speculative philosophy. But has this thesis any positive purpose ? As well as trying to exercise *philosophical* disputes, Professor Carnap also hopes by his technique to dispose of disputes between *scientists*;[2] for he maintains that when scientific tenets, such as determinism and the uncertainty principle of quantum physics, vitalism and mechanism, and the like, are translated into the formal mode of speech, no dispute remains but merely a question of expediency, *i.e.* the need to decide what language, that of determinism or of the uncertainty principle, that of vitalism or of mechanism, and so on, is the more suitable one to use. This claim, if valid, would have an important bearing on science. The only answer to it would be for scientists to try it; but meanwhile one is left with the suspicion that these dis-

(1) A. J. Ayer, *The Foundation of Empirical Knowledge*, London, 1940, pp. 146 - 53.

(2) Rudolf Carnap, *The Logical Syntax of Language*, London, 1937, pp. 307, 322 - 8.

putes are being cleverly made invisible.

Summary of Chapters III, IV, V, and VI.

Logical analysis arose through a realistic desire to know more precisely what the assertions of speculative philosophy meant. This must begin with an attempt to explain carefully how the more important words that occur in philosophy are being used. Accordingly types of definition are classified, the most important in this connexion being the analytic definition which gives the meaning of a word . Now the main point underlying this way of handling philosophy is that words can only have meanings that occur in the ordinary, untechnical, use of language; special philosophical senses of words cannot be explained unless they can be defined in terms of words that anyone that knows ordinary language can understand — otherwise they can have no meaning. Thus there can be no privileged senses of words in philosophy. This when viewed from the opposite angle becomes the doctrine of NonSense, which asserts that words that cannot be defined in terms of ordinary ones make no sense, and that statements that embody them are NonSense.

The problem of definition of a word becomes more general, namely, that of "defining" a statement as a whole — in this form, however, the process is called "translation". One statement is then said to *mean the same as* another if the two are translatable into each other; and here, too, if a philosophical statement cannot be translated into a statement involving ordinary language alone, then it is NonSense. And it may be said to violate logical grammar or logical syntax.

We may also reach the same result by admitting that certain commonsense statements must be true, such as "That is an inkstand", or "I have a father". We all know what these *mean* and we know that they are often true, but we do not

know the *analyses* of their meanings. Even so, however, we can say that any statement that is incompatible with the truth of such commonsense statements must be NonSense. This method stresses commonsense again, but commonsense epistemology rather than commonsense logic.

If we concentrate on the translatability of statements without being specially interested in their meaning, the point being their substitutability in a calculus, we may find that certain statements that seem to be about *things* can be translated into statements about *words*. When that happens the former type of statement might mislead us into thinking that there existed objects that do not in fact exist, for we might have believed we were talking about things when all the time we were talking only about words. Had we made the error of supposing these things to exist we should have been guilty of NonSense.

Another approach is that of verification, which savours slightly of the scientific rather than the linguistic. Here a statement has no sense unless it can be to some extent verified in possible sense-experience. Thus a scientific concept that had no bearing on any experiment or experience would be NonSense. Here instead of seeking a meaning of a statement in an armchair fashion, we can ask what kind of situation would answer to it.

All these ways of approaching the matter presuppose the denial of the subject-predicate logic of Aristotle. For the belief used to prevail that both subject and predicate necessarily stood for some object. This is easily seen to lead to NonSense. Thus "there are no square circles" would on the Aristotelian view imply the existence of square circles.

This development necessitated a new theory of logic, based on a number of different propositional forms, instead of only one. If in "The author of *Waverley* is Scott" the phrase "The

author of *Waverley*" was the name of an object, then we should have two things : the author of *Waverley* and Scott. This NonSense-multiplication of entities is avoided by translation of the statement so that the pseudo-object phrase "The author of *Waverley*" disappears on translation. If this view of logic were not true, the introduction of shorthand phrases such as "The author of *Waverley*" would automatically add to the number of entities in the universe.

Incomplete symbols form the most important kind of phrases that disappear on translation of the statements in which they occur; they are more general than descriptive phrases like "The author of *Waverley*". Thus "England is a monarchy" is to be translated : "Englishmen acknowledge a monarch", so that pseudo-objects such as England and monarchy are rejected as NonSense, and we are not led to make NonSense statements such as that England is a philosophic unity of Englishmen.

It is to be specially noted that all these methods of attack on NonSense are equivalent to attacking hypostatised entities. This the speculative philosophers did too, but the form of language in which logical analysts express themselves is better suited to avoiding this error. From the widespread existence of the tendency, it may be inferred that there is a deep-rooted psychological reason for it,.

Logical analysis may be said, then, to spring from definition, growing into a logic of incomplete symbols, in which the subject-predicate logic is denied, in which the existence of commonsense objects of sense-experience is asserted, and in which hypostatised entities beyond the world of sense-experience are rejected as NonSense. The theory of sense-perception and the theory of logic can be thus interwoven.

It would seem that the main activity of logical analysis is the negative one of revealing NonSense; but it has been

claimed to have a positive side, namely that it exhibits the structure of propositional form, the logical structure of our language, or that it expresses all knowledge in the language of behaviourist psychology. In all probability, however, these contentions are speculative, and important only so far as they bear on the task of unravelling NonSense.

CHAPTER VII

The General Effect of Logical Analysis.

... where there is affinity of language, owing to the common philosophy of grammar — I mean owing to the unconscious domination and guidance of similar grammatical functions — it cannot but be that everything is prepared at the outset for a similar development and succession of philosophical systems; just as the way seems barred against certain other possibilities of world - interpretation. It is highly probable that philosophers within the domain of the Ural - Altaic languages (where the conception of the subject is least developed) look otherwise "into the world", and will be found on paths of thought different from those of the Indo - Germans and Musulmans : the spell of certain grammatical functions is ultimately also the spell of *physiological* valuations and racial conditions.

Might not the Philosopher elevate himself above faith in grammar ? All respect to governesses, but is it not time that philosophy should renounce governess - faith ?   Nietzsche.

Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent.
                                             Ludwig Wittgenstein.

Now that we have seen the nature of speculative philosophy and developed the important concept of NonSense, which is one of the main contributions of logical analysis to philosophy, we are in a position to grasp the completely disintegrating effect that this concept has upon speculation. If it is true that all the great thought of centuries is rendered valueless, speculators must recognise the fact. To see how the actual wreckage comes about in practice, I will take some speculative problems, in order to show that from the standpoint of logical analysis they were founded on NonSense and that vast metaphysical edifices have been constructed solely to

provide answers to NonSense-questions. Whether the result is final, and if so in what sense, will be considered in subsequent chapters.

One of the most striking circumstances in connexion with speculative philosophy is the unanimous attempt on the part of speculative thinkers to deal with Descartes's dualism: each of the many philosophers that came after him "solved" this problem in his own special way. When all these thinkers produced different "solutions", and when not one of these is now accepted or ever has been accepted for long, a hint is forthcoming that there may have been *no problem*, that Descartes and all subsequent speculators were engaged on a problem that did not exist. These philosophers, then, solved dualism *on the assumption that there was a dualism to solve* : they solved a "problem" Descartes should not have set; and the proper solution would consist, not in explaining the dualism, but in showing that *there is no dualism to be explained*. Many writers have made this point; and some forms of Idealism, for instance, have been evolved by this method. But their solution takes the form of denying the existence of dualism in a certain way : they admit that it exists and proceed to show that its existence is *only apparent* — that certain factors, which give the appearance of dualism do not really have this effect.

But this way out of the difficulty is not that taken by logical analysis; dualism is not by some speculative sleight of hand made to disappear. That is to say, the state of affairs that "dualism" has been used to describe cannot be so described at all, and further all propositions about dualism are not merely false but NonSense : no situations can be thought of that would determine if the propositions were true or false — or verify them; the words involved in such propositions are not used in any way in which people ever use them. Similarly, all assertions about dualism involve the use of words,

such as "mind", "matter", "body", and so on, in senses that they never have or in pseudo-object "senses". Accordingly such assertions are NonSense.

The consequent predicament is that not only Descartes's problem was NonSense but also all the speculative attempts to solve that problem. Thus the writings of historical philosophy have a chance of escaping the NonSense dustbin only if they were somehow or other about a totally different topic from dualism — which leaves small loophole for the mass of speculative writings.

In its treatment of dualism, logical analysis has nothing positive to put in the place of what it dispels; but it leaves the field clear for scientific investigation of the relation between physiological and mental processes.

An instructive example of logical analysis is afforded by the time-honoured statement that 7 and 5 make 12. Kant thought he had to prove that 7 and 5 were *necessarily* 12. This implies that he hypostatised numbers, that he regarded 7 as an object — some queer abstract kind of object. Perhaps it was a *concept*, but concepts cannot be *added* — unless they are hypostatised. This being so he had to prove that this entity 7 plus this entity 5 were *necessarily* the same as the entity 12; for once he had transformed 7 and so on into things, it was quite possible that 7 and 5 would not make 12, and hence the craving to prove the necessity. Of course, if Kant had been challenged he would have agreed that 7 was not a thing but a number. But if you say 7 is a number you are saying it is *something* — you cannot get away from the grammar of the sentence. The danger is obviated, however, if we translate into the formal mode of speech, "The sign '7' is not a thing-sign but a numerical sign". One might sum up by saying rhetorically if misleadingly that 7 is not a number or that there are no numbers. Failure to grasp the point led Kant, for

instance, to devise the vast speculation of the *a priori* synthetic proposition.

The solution of this question, due, I believe, to Professor Wittgenstein, is that such propositions have *linguistic necessity* and no other kind of necessity.

This solution, which at first seems most paradoxical, is difficult to expound and difficult to grasp. The reason perhaps lies in its simplicity. The solution is, as it were, too short, and little of an explanatory character can be added — one has to grow used to it. It may best be divided into a positive and a negative side, followed by criticism of the traditional view. When the second and third of these are understood, the first becomes plain. Positive side : — Kant and others did not ask as they ought, "how is it that 7 plus 5 = 12 ?, to which the answer simply is that it is so because of the way in which the words "seven", "plus", "equals", and "twelve" are used : for — negative side : — if you say that 7 plus 5 do not make 12, we reply that you are not using the words as they commonly are used, and if you ask why they are used thus, you are asking a psychological or an etymological question. Critical side : — Instead of this question, Kant and others asked, "How is it that 7 plus 5 are *necessarily* 12 ?" Now no arithmetician who uses such propositions ever requires the "*necessarily*", so that it attracts our suspicion. There are two possibilities : either the word "necessarily" adds nothing at all which is not already contained in "7 plus 5 = 12" which is quite plausible seeing that the 7, 5, and 12 are *universals;* or else the "necessarily" is not superfluous — but what it can add is, I think, merely psychological, a craving for inevitability, rather than additional information about the *relation* connecting 7, *plus*, 5, and 12. This craving is quite possibly the outcome of the tendency to hypostatise 7, 5, and 12, (which is psychologically likely to be equivalent to *personification*). To

see this let us consider the reflections of a critical reader of the negative side above : he might say "Perhaps I *am* asking a psychological or etymological question, when I ask why the words are used thus; but surely the words 'seven', 'five', and 'twelve' would not be used in their commonly accepted usage unless 7 and 5 really made 12. Here perhaps we see why the solution can appear to be so very paradoxical. We cannot get our mind away from the habit of thinking of the *numbers* 7, 5, and 12 as if they were *things*. But instead of numbers we must get used to thinking of number-signs as part of our numerical language, which affords us a short, useful, way of talking about any group of objects we might meet with.

The solution may be facilitated by distinguishing between the statements : "The number 7 plus the number 5 makes the number 12" and "7 things added to 5 things make 12 things". The former follows of linguistic necessity from the definitions of the numerals, but the latter, being an empirical statement, may be false. Thus 7 drops of water added to 5 drops of water make just one drop of water.

A similar fate befalls the "thing-in-itself". Assertions about it must now be regarded not as false but as NonSense*. But an important qualification must also be made : all historical disproofs of the existence of the entity, if put in conceptual terms,

---

(*) It is interesting to note that the doctrine of NonSense, which has here been used against Kant, was in a certain form first expressed by him, though his formulation leaves something to be desired. When he came to consider noumena, things-in-themselves, or the Ideals of Reason, he held, correctly in accordance with his principles, that the categories could not be applied to these entities; and his solution of the antinomies, among other things, was based on this . It was not, for instance, that a noumenal event could not cause another noumenal event;you could not say it could or could not. In the older language "the terms did not apply". As it is put now, the propositions involved were NonSense, because words such as "cause" could not be used in any known sense of noumena. Bradley, too, must be credited

are themselves also NonSense. For to try to prove that an assertion about a thing-in-itself" is false is to imply that it *might* have been true in some sense. Hence assertions designed for disproof themselves use the word "thing-in-itself" as if it could make sense, which it never can; thus all these disproof assertions likewise fail to make sense. The only way to carry out a disproof is to use the linguistic or formal mode of speech — instead of saying that the notion of the thing-in-itself is false, the mode of speech must be that the word "thing-in-itself" is without application.

These examples show the general effect of logical analysis upon metaphysics; others will be given latter which illustrate certain aspects of the approach.

Throughout the development of the subject in the foregoing chapters — and in those to follow — all forms of speculation have been classed together simply as metaphysics, and all forms of logical analysis and logical positivism classed together simply as logical analysis. This has not been done with the intention of denying that there are internal differences; it has been done because the identity of the forms thus grouped is all that is relevant to the present work. It is not maintained that speculative thinkers never made non-speculative statements, but only that metaphysics, no matter what form it assumes, has one basic pattern. Again, different lo-

---

with seeing dimly at one point that the doctrine is essentially concerned with the usage of words, for, in denying the existence of a region of reality outside sentience, he says "to assert that possibility would be in the end to use words without a meaning" (F. H. Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, London, 1925, p. 147). But the first to realise it was, of course, Hume (quoted in Ch. IV, p. 48, & Ch. IX, p. 130. To the logical analyst, however, falls the credit of formulating the doctrine, and for seeing that it has a much greater width of application than had been supposed by any previous philosopher, except perhaps Hume.

gical analysts may have had different aims; but the foregoing chapters have, I hope, shown that all forms of logical analysis have in common the pattern of reducing speculation to NonSense.

CHAPTER VIII

Misuse of Logical Analysis

Verissimum adeo est definitiones, sicut nonnullis rebus lucem, ita vicissim aliis tenebras afferre. — Berkeley.

It is certain there are a sort of men that can puzzle truth, but cannot enjoy the satisfaction of it. — Berkeley.

The aim of logical analysis is the clarification of thought, which on the negative side has reduced speculation to Non-Sense. On the positive side, it has been suggested that the method would be useful to scientists. The treatment of "$7 + 5 = 12$" would seem to bear this out; none the less, the main conception involved — that mathematical symbols obey arbitrary rules of usage — first came from mathematical researches; without these it is doubtful if the conception would have proved mathematically fruitful. In the experimental sciences, scientific ideas come first in the form of ideas as a whole, and not as a synthetic result of logical processes; the logical analyses of these ideas may be interesting afterwards, but no analysis will *produce* an idea. Thus Professor Moore's classification of senses of "mental"[1] does not help the sciences of the mind, nor do any of Professor Broad's many senses of the word "unconscious"[2] bear on psycho-analysis. Evid-

(1) G. E. Moore "The Subject-Matter of Psychology", *Proc. Arist. Soc.* N.S. Vol. X, London, 1910.

(2) C. D. Broad, *The Mind and its Place in Nature*, London, 1929, Chapter VIII.

ently a science provides new information, unobtainable by logical analysis, and we must await scientific or empirical data or facts without hoping to arrive at them by logical means in advance of their empirical discovery. On the other hand there is no reason to deny that some form of critical clarification can be valuable, if it is carried out after the scientific processes of finding facts and framing concepts has been completed or at least is well under way.

Within the sphere of philosophy it often happens that logical analysis is used to provide clarification on occasions when context or commonsense would show clearly what meaning was intended. Let us consider, for instance, the situation once described by Sir Arthur Eddington of sitting at two tables —one a physical object with characteristic sensible appearances recognisable as being sensible appearances of a table, the other a dance of electrons. From the ultramicroscopic point of view, the table composed of electrons is extremely porous, since there are relatively enormous gaps between the electrons; hence the table is not *solid*. This does not mean, however, that a book lying on the physical table may fall through it, because the book is bombarded by a steady stream of the electrons that form the scientific table.[1] In this way arises the conception that there are really *two* tables; and therewith a distinction between "appearance" and "reality" and its metaphysical consequences.

In this mode of thought the most striking feature is the paradoxical statement that the table is not solid; and this has been subjected to logico-analytical criticism by Professor Stebbing . She contends that "unless the floor is solid, the

(1) Sir Arthur Eddington, *The Nature of the Physical World*, Cambridge, 1929, p. xi, *seq. et passim.*

word 'solid' has no assignable meaning";[1] and that "the dis-
covery that atoms are 'tenuous' was possible only because
a piece of iron, for instance, is solid."[2] Suppose[3] we consider
stepping on a *solid* plank. This is not like stepping on a swarm
of flies, and in her view the difference is to be described simply
by saying that the plank is *solid* and the swarm of flies is not
— however scientifically true it may be that the dance of
electrons forming the plank is, so to speak, more fierce than
the dance of electrons forming the swarm of flies.

"It is worth while to examine with some care what exact-
ly it is that Eddington is denying when he asserts that 'the
plank has no solidity of substance'. What are we to under-
stand by 'solidity' ? Unless we do understand it we cannot
understand what the denial of solidity to the plank amounts
to. But we can understand 'solidity' only if we can truly say
that the plank is solid. For 'solid' just is the word we use to
describe a certain respect in which a plank of wood resem-
bles a block of marble, a piece of paper, and a cricket ball,
and in which each of these differs from a sponge, from the
interior of a soap-bubble, and from the holes in a net . . . The
point is that the common usage of language enables us to at-
tribute a meaning to the phrase 'a solid plank'; but there is
no common usage of language that provides a meaning for
the 'solid' that would make sense to say that the plank on which
I stand is not *solid* . . . If the plank is non-solid, then what
does 'solid' *mean* ? . . If the plank is non-solid, then where
can we find an example to show us what 'solid' means ?"[4]

Logically Professor Stebbing's remarks are unanswerable.
But I doubt if the case is quite so bad as she feels. Sir Arthur

---

(1) L. S. Stebbing, *Philosophy and the Physicists*, London, 1937, p. 273.
(2) *Id.*, p. 276.   (3) *Id.*, p. 48.
(4) *Id.*, pp. 51-3.

Eddington is using a very graphic way of describing the nature of electrons, and if this were all she would not obiect; she objects only when he deduces strange philosophical consequences about "reality" or the "inscrutable". Now when this procedure is indulged in, logical analysis is an efficient logical weapon for revealing the error; *but it is not a prophylactic against future mistakes*. It is simply one way of demonstrating that a mistake *has been* made. The speculative cast of mind, however, bent on erecting metaphysical edifices, merely *uses* a confusion of this kind as a *mechanism*, but will find another one if that one is denied to him—the logical confusion would seem to be not a cause but a cog in the mechanism of the error. Consequently there can be no objection to Sir Arthur Eddington's use of "solid", so far as it is expressive, since a reader not prone to the speculative will not fall into his mistake any more than he will take a metaphor literally, and since a reader prone to the speculative will manage to ιall into his mistake by hook or crook, using one means if another ιails him.

But let us ask what "solid" means. To most people it primarily means unyielding or hard and non-porous, and in consequence of being hard a "solid" object in certain positions *will support other things*. Now when Sir Arthur Eddington tells us that nothing is really solid, he cannot mean that nothing can feel hard or can support another object; and in fact he means *porous*. But again, he does not mean *perceptibly porous*. He means that the constituents of matter are electron-particles, spatially widely separated, which *behave dynamically* in such a way as to produce sensible appearances of an unyielding and non-porous character, and that this character, being dependent both upon the dynamic dance of electrons forming, say, a table and upon our sense-organs, *is not* a permanent feature of the universe, whereas the electron-constituents of

the matter forming the table *are* a permanent feature of it.*

Professor Stebbing would, no doubt, like to improve language or linguistic custom so that Sir Arthur Eddington could say what he wished to say about the table and its non-solidity without paradoxical consequences that lead to philosophical speculation. But there is perhaps another and more promising alternative : that is, to modify the speculative temperament. It would then become a matter of indifference if a scientist continued to say that nothing was really solid, since we should not feel any paradox and not feel deceived, any more than we are now induced to think that when lightning strikes a hut it picks up some gigantic weapon and delivers a blow.

Logical analysis is thus confronted not merely with misleading linguistic usage but with the entire weight of the speculative outlook, which in the illustration just given cloaks the distinction between a scientist's use of "solid" and the ordinary usage — it is confronted with a psychological refusal to understand. The effectiveness of demands for definition is therefore likely to be limited.

On the other hand, the demand for definition proceeds not only from a desire to refute speculation but to do so by some logical means — it is a logical form of a hostile tendency. Now it has been shown in the illustration to be an attack on a speculative misunderstanding of commonsense facts, such as that a plank is solid and that a swarm of flies is not; but in such cases the fallacy could usually be exposed without the high degree of subtlety displayed by logical analysis, especially when the meaning of what is analysed is clear from

(*) relatively permanent, *i.e.* permanent so long as the table is not destroyed — physical objects being obviously permanent in a way that sensible appearances are not.

its context; and this suggests that not only has the speculative thinker failed to understand but that there has been some failure to grasp the significance of the context on the part of the logical analyst. This is not, of course, a criticism of the use of definition, but of the needless use of it.

There is a point that may strike some as concerning an unimportant verbal matter, but I think it is not without significance. Logical analysts employ a curious sense of "philosophy" either expressed or implied. When a man asks a "philosophical" question (which means speculative), it is the business of the "philosophical" answer (which means logico-analytical) to clarify it or correct it. Philosophy has been identified for some years in certain circles with logical analysis; but the admission must be made that in its task of displaying speculation to be NonSense logical analysis is dealing with philosophy too, though this comes to be thought of as *a different kind* of philosophy.

Now it is most unfortunate that logical analysts do not draw attention to this, because, by identifying philosophy with logical analysis, they suggest that there is no other kind of philosophy or that logical analysis is the only important kind. To put in a qualifying adjective and talk of logico-analytical philosophy would be more in keeping with scientific temper. Language that implies that no philosophy other than logical analysis exists is very misleading; for though speculation may be NonSense it none the less exists. It would be a mistake, and might strike opponents as savouring of emotional prejudice, to take the name "philosophy" exclusively for one kind of outlook and to deny it to what has for hundreds of years been called philosophy. This practice* might well seem

---

(*) It may of course be due to the belief that all speculative philosophers were trying (though unsuccessfully) to be logical analysts.

to a detached observer to be a manifestation of the family-circle viewpoint.

One effect* of this practise is the attempt that has been made to claim that the celebrated philosophers of the past were really trying to carry out logical analysis, although they did not (since the rules had not been discovered) do it very well.[1] This can be upheld to a small extent in the cases of Plato, Aristotle, Berkeley, and Hume. Yet it is difficult to reconcile this with what would appear to be well authenticated facts that the aims of Plato and Aristotle transcended their analyses, that their interests were speculative. With Berkeley and Hume the speculative element is nothing like so prominent; but the most recent and thorough work on Berkeley would show that he was an analyst only if it served his purpose : by abstracting this theory of perception from his philosophy, we obtain quite a good case for regarding his work as analysis — but what then of his philosophy ? The case about Hume is controversial; but it may be remarked that he was so much a Berkeleian (in the subjectivist interpretation) that one would suspect the traditional view of his work of being correct; but until the matter is more fully discussed, it can scarcely be granted that he was a logical analyst.

The claim that all philosophy was attempted analysis is difficult to maintain when tested by the work of Kant, Hegel, and Nietzsche, perhaps the three greatest philosophers of modern times. Part of Kant's work can be allowed an analytical form; but scarcely a word of Hegel's or Nietzsche's. And the fact that it is possible to group Hegel and Nietzsche

---

(*) unless, of course, it is a cause.

(1) See, for example, A. J. Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic*, London, 1936, p. 52.

together, two philosophers of the highest rank who differ
from one another as greatly as it is possible for two philoso-
phers to differ, shows that some broader criterion is required
by which to assess them. One was the greatest system-maker,
the other the most extreme nihilist of systems. It would appear,
therefore, that philosophy lies, neither in the dialectic of the
one nor the aphorism of the other, but in the deep insight into
speculative thought of the one and into things human of the
other with which every page abounds — precisely that side
of their work that must necessarily fail to appear in a treatise
on the history of philosophy, for this is often but another name
for the evolution of skeletons.

But so far from its being obvious that all philosophy was
attempted logical analysis, it could be maintained that log-
ical analysis was philosophy in the same sense as all that
preceded it and that it was but one of the many forms of phil-
osophy. Let us see therefore if logical analysis has something
important in common with all other forms of traditional
philosophy.

There is no need to labour the claim that the paradox
of the Permanent and the Changeable underlay all problems
of historical philosophy, such as the Mind-body Dualism,
God and Nature, Substance and Accidents, Thing and Qual-
ities, Matter and Form, Universal and Particular, Whole
and Parts, Reality and Appearance, or more generally the
One and the Many. This content of the Permanent and the
Changeable seems to be what gives to philosophy its peculiar
form. Now it is easy to see how a part of logical analysis con-
forms to this criterion. One of its important aspects concern-
ed the translating of one sentence by another so as to effect
a change of *level*, or, in more general terms, the disappearing
of the symbol for a logical construction in connexion with
this kind of translation. The example has already been given

that *England is a monarchy* may be analysed into *Englishmen acknowledge a monarch* in which there is a change of *level* from England to Englishmen : thus England is a logical construction out of Englishmen. The point to be observed is that this form of logical analysis relates England and Englishmen by means of the theory of logical constructions. In traditional language England would be the Permanent and Englishmen the Changeable; and England would be a unity of Englishmen, or the Permanent would be a unity of the Changeable. Similarly in the case of sense-perception, in which the phenomenalist analysis of *I see a table* is given by a set of statements about sense-data and the relations between them, the important point is that the word "table" does not occur in the translation : that is to say, tables are logical constructions out of sense-data. Here the table (the Permanent) is the unity of its sense-data (the Changeable). Thus the Permanent and the Changeable certainly makes its appearance in logical analysis. (What is important, however, is not that the Permanent and the Changeable should incidentally be involved, but that it should be the main subject-matter. Thus the examples just given concern philosophy only if they are really being used as examples in the discussion of the Permanent and the Changeable. Hence logical analysis is being philosophical when the Permanent and the Changeable is being discussed directly as a question in logical constructions. I would therefore call discussion of logical constructions, rather than their use, philosophic discussion.)

Hence it would appear that the one philosophic theme has been written and rewritten in new shapes — so many epochs, so many new philosophical garbs for the one unchangeable philosophical theme. For this criterion the merit may be claimed that it embraces in a single conception all the philosophies hitherto known, from speculative philosophy to

logical analysis; and, in accordance with this, philosophy might be defined as *the logical treatment of reflection upon the Permanent and the Changeable.*

There is in the minds of many logical analysts a certain feeble interest in speculative philosophy, as if they wished they could find out what it meant, or if it meant anything. Though it has been *démodé* for some time, philosophers now appear to be somewhat apologetic — sorry for the plight of speculative philosophy, but hardly willing to do anything positive in the matter.

Professor Ryle, after giving an important paper[1] on some errors of speculative thought, wound up in this way : "But, as confession is good for the soul, I must admit that I do not very much relish the conclusions towards which these conclusions point. I would rather allot to philosophy a sublimer task than the detection of the sources of linguistic idioms, of recurrent misconstructions and absurd theories. But that it is at least this I cannot feel any serious doubt." He feels there is no hope for speculative thought in the hands of the logical-analyst. And he is quite right; but as will be maintained in a later chapter, it is not in the right hands.

Professor Moore, and Mr. John Wisdom, Mr. Ayer, and Professor Mace have at different times expressed the belief that speculative thinkers meant something. It is likely that their puzzlement was in great part — probably solely — due to their seeking an objective meaning for speculative statements. Mr. Ayer[2], for instance, has written :" Thus

(1)   Gilbert Ryle, "Systematically Misleading Expressions", *Proc Arist. Soc.*, N.S. Vol. XXXII, London, 1931-2, p. 170.

(2)   A.J. Ayer, "The Genesis of Metaphysics", *Analysis*, Vol. 1, No. 4, Oxford, 1934, p. 58.

the message of an absolutist metaphysic might perhaps be tritely extressed in a few such sentences as, if you take a broad enough view you will see that what appears to be evil in this world always is a factor in some greater good". Mr. Ayer continues that this at any rate expresses a significant proposition; but absolutists would certainly hold that this has nothing whatever to do with any absolutist metaphysic.

Another interesting theme for logical analysis is the absolutist doctrine of the part to whole relation. All through speculative philosophy we find some form of what has been called the "metaphysical craving for unity". Philosophers have repeatedly stressed the unity possessed by a whole which was not possessed by the assemblage of its parts : thus the curve of Aristotle's bow was somehow "more than" its convexity and its concavity; many have pointed to the organism as "more than" a sum of chemical substances; Bosanquet noticed that a wood was "more than" the collection of its trees and that a crowd was "more than" the sum of collected individuals. Some unities, moreover, were "closer" than others—the mind, for example, being a higher or closer unity than the organism — some exhibited unity better than others.

The relation may be illustrated by means of the statement "England is a monarchy". If the whole is not "more than" the assemblage of its parts, this statement may be correctly replaced without alteration of meaning by "Every Englishman is a monarchy", which makes no sense at all. It follows that the whole — England — is "more than" the assemblage of its parts — Englishman. Thus the class-view (to use the customary phrase) is NonSense (not false), *i.e. England is the same as all Englishmen* is NonSense. So far the Absolutists were correct, though they indulged in a curious mode of speculation in order to dispose of the class view. The obvious thing

to say now is that the whole is "more than" the class of its parts — it is "a philosophic unity of those parts".

Now from an objective point of view the entire meaning of the statement *can* be given by statements about the parts in question and about no other objects. This is brought about by making these statements also about the *relations* between these parts. Hence a statement about England can be replaced without change of meaning by a statement about Englishmen and their relations (possibly of a constitutional character). to one another. Older philosophers would have said that England *consisted* of Englishmen and their relations to one another. Hence it is true that the whole is the unity of its parts, if this kind of thing is meant. Thus England is the unit of Englishmen if in sentences containing "England" this word can be replaced, without changing the meaning of the sentences, by phrases about Englishmen and their mutual relations.

Here "England" is not replaced solely by "Every Englishman" in such a way as to produce the NonSense proposition, *Every Englishman is a monarchy*; for, though in saying something about England, such as that it is a monarchy, we are saying something about Englishmen, we are not restricted to saying *exactly the same thing* of them as we did of England. Older philosophers might have phrased it that we attach a new predicate. The result is that not only part of the sentence is changed but all of it. The sort of change required when "England" is replaced by "Englishmen" is to replace "is a monarchy" by "*acknowledge a monarch*". This sentence (assuming it to be satisfactory) is not about England but about Englishmen, and the word "acknowledge" is so used as to embrace the statements needed concerning the mutual relations between Englishmen.

On the basis of this analysis the whole is certainly the unity of its parts; but it is very doubtful if the absolutists meant only

what this analysis allows, and if so they were right only so far as they rejected the class-view. Since this analysis gives all that could logically be required, the possibility presents itself that the absolutists were attaching some *extra psychological significance* to the phrase about the unity of the whole.

Whatever psychological significance is residual after this analysis, has not only been left untouched but is apparently untouchable; and this is the important aspect of the dogma to the absolutists. The part that is analysable and has just been analysed gives a logical definition of "unity"; but with this the absolutists were little concerned. All that logical analysis succeeds in doing then is to analyse the unimportant part of the dogma. The absolutists sought not so much to state the structure of their unity or give an analytic definition as to enlarge upon its *emergent properties*. They did not use the word "emergent", but it seems to be most appropriate. Wholes were more than their parts because of some *emergent* character not present in its parts considered merely as parts.

Thus "......idealism holds that what is immediately given in any experience implies a whole beyond it, and it points us to that whole and its relations to other things within the whole for its explanation and reality." "It points out, that when we ask for the explanation of any immediately given fact of experience or indeed of anything finite we find that it is a fragment of a larger whole, that its real nature is beyond its given actuality, that in order to understand it we have to consider it in relation to the whole of which it is a part."

(*) These quotations are taken from a paper, "Idealism and its Critics," (not so far as I know published) read before the Dublin University Metaphysical Society at its opening meeting in November, 1933. Professor Macbeath who read the paper was attempting as part of his object to state shortly and clearly what he considered to be the tenets and standpoint of

This may be summarised by saying that Reality transcends the given.* The problem is to find out in what way the part requires the whole for its explanation — "explanation" is an extremely difficult word in this context, but can probably be interpreted. This *explanation* is a whole, reality, and truth. How can this be ?

The absolutists were not concerned with scientific explanation; accordingly, to ascertain what kind of meaning they attached to "explanation", the only course open to us is to seek an example of a whole. To quote Professor Macbeath once more from his summary of Absolutism : "....... mind or spirit [is] the most perfect, in fact the only real, unity which we know and therefore the clue to the character of the ultimately real." Mind is indeed a convenient example; but that an Absolutist should not take the State, or Art, as still more perfect is surprising. Bosanquet illustrates the unity of the Absolute in mind in a very curious and striking way.[1]

"Just to bring our suggestions together by a very imperfect simile, we might compare the Absolute to, say, Dante's mind as uttered in the *Divine Comedy*. The point would be that in it external nature, say, Italy, becomes an emotion and a

Absolutism. I take his quotations, not because I wish to debate a point with Professor Macbeath or even because I suppose that he would consider them as adequately representing his own views, but because they appear to me to be short, clear, and just statements about Absolutism, eminently suitable for the immediate purpose. I wish to thank Professor Macbeath for kindly allowing me to quote from his paper.

(*) Professor Macbeath also notes : "But while reality transcends the immediately given, the idealist holds that it does not transcend experience as such" — *ibid*. He thus calls attention to the Absolutist dictum that the Absolute is a sentient experience.

(1) Bernard Bosanquet : *Principle of Individuality and Value*. London, 1912, p. xxxvii.

value; each self, say Paolo or Francesca, while still its real self, is also a factor in the poet's mind, which is uttered in all these selves taken together; and the whole poetic experience is single, and yet includes a world of space and persons, which to any common mind fall apart and become, 'a geographical expression' plus certain commonplace historical figures. This inclusion we compare to the Absolute, as it holds together what for us is finite experience."

This passage undoubtedly affords some clue to the nature of wholes; but what this clue is it is difficult to say. The notion of *function* is, however, dimly apparent, but in order to arrive at this a different mode of approach is required.

Taking some ordinary object such as a motor-plug, what whole is there that *explains* this part ? (not that *contains* it). If we examine the object called "a plug", not knowing what a plug is used for, we shall deem it a peculiar sort of thing and attach to it no *significance*. But, if a motorist discourses on the way it fits into the engine and what part it plays there, we shall regard it as quite a significant piece of workmanship, for the whole to which it belongs and in which it plays a part gives it *significance* in our eyes. Perhaps it is now fair to translate the statement "The whole explains the part" by "The part signifies the whole", so that an investigation of that difficult relation *explains* can be replaced by one concerning the converse relation *signifies*.

Now to say that the plug signifies a whole is to say that it forms with other parts an assemblage — and something more. This assemblage is to *function*, and the plug is to function in it. No doubt older schools of thought would have expressed this differently, by saying, perhaps, that the *essential nature* of the plug was to function in a certain way — the essential nature differing from the characteristics by which a plug might be recognised : in fact the old adage "A thing

is what it does" would apply here. Be that as it may, "The part signifies the whole" may now be translated by "The part forms with the other parts an assemblage and can function therein." A correction must be made at this stage : when the whole explains the parts, the whole must explain the part *to us*, and similarly the part must signify the whole *to us;* hence the translation ought to be "The part directs our attention to the assemblage that it forms with other parts and to its power to function therein". The whole is the functioning of the assemblage.

All this seems obvious and true, and to some extent it expresses the standpoint of the Absolutists; for Bosanquet gives as examples of what philosophy needs as material "what the painter perceives when he represents a wood, and not merely a number of trees, or the sociologist, when he understands a crowd and not merely a number of persons."[1]

But, if the above analysis expresses *all* that Absolutists meant, there would surely be some acceptance of their views to-day and less opposition — though *perhaps* their inability to write analytical English lies at the root of most hostility to the school, for however true a doctrine may be it will not be accepted if the language in which it is expressed is too far removed from present-day style to be understood. This analysis moreover throws a little light on the Dante simile, for the several characters there mentioned had for their function a part to play in the functioning of Dante's mind. Thus the notion of *functioning* appears to bring Bosanquet's illustrations under the discussion about the plug.

Unfortunately there can be little doubt that the Absolutists meant more than what is given by this analysis. What they appear to have held over and above this tenet is

(1) *Id.*, p. xvii.

that the part was *an appearance* and that the whole was *real*. No doubt this would be so if the part seemed to be the whole; but no one would be likely to mistake the part for the whole. Another meaning could be found by taking into consideration another Absolutist dogma, that the part was *an appearance* of the whole, that whole *appeared in* the part. But this seems to have been an additional doctrine and not what was meant by saying that the part was an appearance. A very tentative suggestion may be put forward.

One feature that a great many of the elements of the world appeared to possess was to be *material*. Tables, chairs, gramophones, and so on — and in a wide sense even organisms — were material objects. This usage implies at least that these objects were not mental. Now it seems that Bradley *thought* they were mental. Accordingly it may represent his view fairly to say that these objects *appeared* to be material, *i.e.* non-mental, whereas they *really* were mental. Extending this notion to other things held by him to be appearances, such as causation and time, which cannot be said to be material, the suggestion is that they appear to be non-mental whereas in Bradley's view they really are mental. A certain justification for this suggested interpretation lies in the general philosophic assumption that *mental* and *material* were mutually exclusive and exhaustive — whereas of course it is now widely held that they are neither exclusive nor exhaustive.

As to this usage of "mental", it either stands for a predicate as does "yellow" in "This daffodil is yellow", or else for a logical construction, that is to say, a statement that for example tables or time were mental would require further elucidation in order to present its meaning. In other words to say that these things were mental might only be to say that they or some aspect of them bore some important relation to the Absolute. In this case we are as far away as ever from Bradley's

meaning; but by clinging to the last hope of an elucidation, and taking *mental* to be a predicate, it may be possible to attach a meaning to "appearance".

When Bradley thought that things that appeared to be material really were mental, he did not mean that they had a predicate *mental* like the predicate that human minds have. This is seen from his view that human minds themselves were appearances (one-sided, abstractions from a wider whole, and so on) *i.e. appeared* to be non-mental in the sense under discussion whereas they *really* were mental in this sense. On the contrary, he held that not only tables, causation, and so on, but even minds human were parts of a wider whole; mentality belonged to the whole of which these were parts. Thus appearances are obtained by splitting up the whole into human minds, on the one hand, and the ordinary world of objects, causation, time, and so on, on the other.

Following this standpoint, it is seen that "The part is an appearance whose reality is the whole" means the same as "The part appears to be non-mental (in a special and important sense) but really — *i.e.* when seen to be a part of a wider whole — is mental", which means the same as "The part appears to an experiencing human mind to be non-mental, but when seen to form a whole with all other things and this human mind it is recognised to be mental", which means the same as "The part appears to an experiencing human mind to be non-mental, but it can be seen to form a whole with all other things and this human mind, and this whole is mental."

This seems to give Bradley's view, and incidentally to throw light on the reason for his usage of "reality" and "spiritual" or "mental"

(*) F. H. Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, London, 1925, Ch. X, where he tries to show that the self is riddled with contradiction.

In particular a plug when regarded merely as a plug, or perhaps merely as a stange sort of object, is non-mental and an appearance; but when the full import of its plugginess is dwelt upon, it is seen to be no longer a "mere plug" but to partake of a mental whole. The "mere plug" was an abstraction achieved only at the expense of carving up this whole.

What emerges that is for present purposes important is that the whole is mental and also relates to human mentality. Thus when above it was suggested that "The whole explains the part" is to be interpreted in terms of *significance* and this in terms of function, it was supposed that the significance of the plug lay in its functioning in the mechanical whole of which it could be a plug, little reference being made to any human mind. Now it appears from the foregoing that Bradley could not have allowed the functioning of the plug, as part of a mechanism, to be regarded in abstraction from some human mind contemplating the matter in some way : this is clear from the above discussion of "appearance". The net result is that all explanation of parts involves an important reference to some experiencing mind, a point at which the matter becomes psychological. It seems probable, too, that here we have a rough inkling of what was meant by saying that the Absolute was a sentient experience : it was not complete without a reference to the experiencing mind.

These results show exactly to what extent logical analysis is effective in the sphere of speculative philosophy. The doctrine of the whole and parts was analysed into a form where the notion of functioning was predominant. The whole was a functioning of its parts : the parts functioned in the whole.*

(*) "Function" occurs here in two different senses; but there is no likelihood of their being confused, since the context always makes it plain which sense is being used.

Yet if this idea is all there is in Absolutism it is surely a some-
what thin and unpretentious philosophy.   We all know that
parts, such as plugs and so on, have a part to play; and, in
teaching us this, Absolutism is certainly presenting nothing start-
ling.   Thus a true part of the main doctrine is trivial.

The discussion went on to the residual element of the doc-
trine, to the effect that a part was an "appearance" and the
whole was "reality", *i.e.* that a characteristic feature of reality
was its being mental.   What must be stressed is   that   this
feature is an extra one.   When parts are assembled into an
assemblage and when by functioning with one another they
form a whole, they are not thereby mental.   This mentality
is an extra feature over and above the functioning :   it is a
feature which the functioning displays, it is   an   emergent
characteristic of the whole.   Unfortunately our application
of logical analysis has produced no information as to the nature
of this property — in other words the factor of Absolutism
that is of chief importance is left untouched and undiagnosed
by logical analysis.   If this method tries to claim that the
analysis in terms of functioning gives an adequate interpret-
ation of Absolutism, then it merely fails to do justice to what
Bradley and Bosanquet were trying to convey.

There are hints that this sense of "mental" has a psycho-
logical reference; but, quite independently of such a fact,
logical analysis must show that this usage gives rise to Non-
Sense statements.   This usage is NonSense because if none
of the known senses of the word as used in our language fit in,
then it has either *no* sense or an *arbitrary* sense.   In the latter
case, since there is no clue to it, the philosop her who assigns
an arbitrary definition is bound to state what it is — other-
wise the word has no sense.   In short a word either has an
ordinary sense or a special sense or no sense; but it never
has a special sense till one is assigned.   Here "mental" has

no ordinary sense, has not been assigned an arbitrary sense by definition, and hence has no sense or gives rise to Non-Sense.

Yet it is evident that some psychological significance attaches to the word in absolutist contexts; for let us remember that the Absolute is a sentient experience. Very likely (i) experience is something mental and (ii) experience has a psychological reference to the absolutist. Elucidation of this difficult tenet may, therefore, assist the problem.

Much play has been made of the distinction between the experienc*ing* and the experienc*ed;* but it is very unlikely that Bradley or Bosanquet in the least confused the two. They were interested in experience in a sense to which this distinction is quite irrelevant. There is no need to delay over the possibility that by "experience" they referred to *what is experienced;* but it is worth considering briefly if they meant *experiencing.* As we should now use the word, "experiencing" would stand for a mental act, in *some* ordinary usage of "mental". We should hold, moreover, that there could be no experiencing without an agent to do the experiencing; nor could this act take place unless directed towards something — in other words something has to be experienced if there is to be any experiencing. These propositions follow linguistically from the usage of the relation-word "experiencing". Thus experiencing would be a mental relation connecting an experiencer with an experienced.

Now though the situation, the experiencer experiencing an experienced, may form a whole, and may contain a mental relation, it is in no way mental as a whole. Hence the distinction between the *ing* and the *ed* yields no clue about the Bradley-Bosanquet meaning.

But if we approach their views independently of this academic framework, it is surely clear that Bradley and Bosanquet did

not refer to experiencer experiencing an experienced by the word "experience". They used the word in an abstract way to refer to *the having of an experience*. Such phrases have a common usage, as in "I had a delightful experience" and the like. In this sense *having experiences* is a *relational property* of the experiencer. More abstractly we talk of a man *being experienced*, meaning that he has had many experiences — he is a man of *experience*. In this way we may talk of *being experienced* or simply of *experience* as a logical construction out of *experiences*. "Experience" may then be used as a convenient and general way of referring to the having of experiences or simply to experiences : it has a "dispositional" or "potential" sense referring to many actual instances. It should be quite clear now that "experience" refers no more to the experien*cing* than to the experien*ced*. And once more if logical analysis tackles Absolutism by means of this distinction it will tackle something never meant by its exponents.

Now *experience*, in this sense, is, again, a *relational property* of the experiencer; and as such it might be taken as *mental* — until we enquire who is the experiencer. We realise that finite minds are not the experiencers in question : for though I may have had this, that, and the other experience and hence may be said *to have had experience* (or known the world and faced reality), and though such experience be mental, yet the vital point the Absolutists wish us to realise is that finite minds are not entities that may possess relational properties like *experience*, but that they are *parts* of experience. In other words experience is a whole, and finite minds function as parts within it; but to talk of a finite mind being experienced is to imply that it is "outside" experience, or that experience — a whole — is something that can belong to the finite mind. This the Absolutists must deny. If their principle of the whole did not compel them to deny that experience could belong to a finite

mind, they would possess a perfectly good sense of "mental".

To summarise the position. We can attach a meaning to "experience" as understood by the Absolutists, and this meaning would allow experience to be mental, *if* experience of this sort could belong to a finite mind. But it cannot. And the only senses of "mental" we know are such as to relate to finite minds; hence there is still no meaning to be attached to "mental" for the Absolutists.

We must suppose that an entity — a non-finite mind — has experience in the way required. Then our experiences and ourselves will be parts of or function in *absolute experience.* That this is the Bradley-Bosanquet view is evident from the Dante simile. What they are in effect doing is to posit a non-finite mind to have experience and then to realise that the experience alone will serve the purpose of their philosophy, and so lop away the entity which has it as an unnecessary encumbrance. The experience — without anything to have it — is then named "The Absolute".

Only in this way, it seems, can wholes be mental; but at the expense of setting up an absolute experience devoid of relation to any known experience; which renders "The absolute experience" devoid of meaning.

Accordingly our logico-analytical examination of "The Absolute is a sentient experience" reveals that NonSense results from the Bradley-Bosanquet usage of "Mental".

The tendency among logical analysts that use the verification-criterion is to dismiss speculation as unverifiable. Those that follow the method of seeking translation analyses in order to ascertain the meaning of a statement, on the other hand, entertain the possibility that speculative philosophers meant something, and try to find out what they meant. The process is usually to consider one translation after another, in the hope

of obtaining a construction that a given speculative statement can reasonably be supposed to bear and that will have a commonsense meaning.

The example of "Time is unreal", mentioned in Chaptet III, and those of the present chapter illustrate the procedure· From these, however, it is evident that there is simple failure to understand the graphic use of words or that successful translation achieves a construction that is trivial, and misleading because inadequate. Thus the analysis carried out of *unity* provided an interpretation that, while it may be acceptable and commonsense, is trivial; but logical analysts sometimes rest in the belief that they have rendered the whole of the meaning of the original speculation, which it may confidently be asserted is mistaken, because whatever speculative speculative philosophers meant they were never concerned with the trivialities ascribed to them. Even when it is realised, however, that a translation is but an analysis of a part of the given speculation, the remainder is left untouched by the analysis. Further, it is the important part that is left untouched, and this is not susceptible of further logical analysis. All the translator can do is to compile as complete a list as he can of the speculative words in a statement and of what may be admitted to be possible translations of the statement itself; and, when he has failed to find senses of the words that fit and make sense and failed to obtain reasonable translations of the statement, he may decide that it is probably NonSense, though he may have a haunting feeling that some perfectly good sense or translation has been overlooked* — and perhaps he is

(*) It may be remarked that this whole procedure works on the assumption that speculative words and statements are ambiguous, whereas it will be conceded by those that have some degree of insight into what speculative philosophers meant that however vague their speculations may have been they suffered from no ambiguity.

nearer to the psychological truth of the matter than is his colleague that employs the criterion of verification. However, having made without success a thorough and methodical search for sense, the logical analyst of the group considered here is bound to conclude that speculation is almost certainly Non-Sense.

Now it should be emphasised that this is the sole effect of logical analysis, and no hope should be entertained, as seems to have been done in the earlier days of its development, that the method should prove an effective weapon for rendering clearer what speculative philosophers had in mind.

It is not to be supposed, however, that the speculative philosopher would be convinced that his grand metaphysical edifices are but castles in the air; and perhaps he would be right in thinking that there is something in his thought that logical analysis has not recognised.

Most of the criticism given in this chapter may mean only that logical analysis has not always been judiciously carried out — which does not touch its intrinsic nature. The misrepresentation of speculation is an error of a different kind, but one not calculated to fill one with confidence concerning logico-analytical findings.

CHAPTER IX.

Is the Method of Logical Analysis
a Contribution ?

"My propositions are elucidatory in this way : he who understands me finally recognises them as senseless, when he has climbed out through them, on them, over them. (He must so to speak throw away the ladder, after he has climbed up on it.)" — Ludwig Wittgenstein.

Let us consider further some examples of misleading statements. " 'Nobody passed me', said the messenger" and "A moth eats a hole" are not misleading; no one will take the one to mean that a person whose name was "Nobody" passed the messenger or the other to mean that a hole is something edible which a moth finds in a suit and eats. But these are the meanings these statements would have on the assumption of traditional logic, which has been misled by their grammar into supposing that they have the same logical form as "Greeks are Europeans"; and, according to logical analysts, this is the kind of mistake that speculative philosophers have made. Thus, instead of translating "England is a monarchy" by "Englishmen acknowledge, a monarch", the speculative assumption is formed that England is a "philosophic unity" of Englishmen, English customs, and so on, an entity that "subsists" in a world of "reality" — like an Idea beyond the world of sense in Plato's World of Ideas — in contrast with which England and English customs are a mere "appearance".

Thus this kind of statement misleads (*i.e.* misleads philosophers) in a way "Nobody passed me" and "A moth eats a hole" do not. Now there must be some reason why this is so; there must be some characteristic difference either between

the two kinds of statement or between the mental attitudes manifested in the two cases. To say that a hole does not exist is to say that it does not exist in the relatively fundamental sense in which a piece of cloth exists, and to say this will cause no distress or embitterment; but to say, on the other hand, that England, in the usage of "England is a monarchy", does not exist will probably cause in some people a disturbance of mind that cannot be alleviated by the assurance that by this is meant that England does not exist in the relatively fundamental sense in which Englishmen and English institutions exist. Many would therefore feel considerable psychological repugnance to the theory of logical constructions for making such statements as that England in a certain sense does not exist. Since psychological factors can be strong enough to prevent a logical point from being appreciated, it is natural to infer that it is psychological needs that invest statements with their misleading character. These needs are surely just as well worth investigating for the purpose of examining the origin of speculative philosophy as the linguistic or logical mechanism by which it also comes about. Moreover, in omitting to discuss the *difference* between "Nobody passed me" and "England is a monarchy" in their treatment of speculation, logical analysts have failed to get to the root of the matter.

To gain insight into the nature of speculation is no part of the logico-analytical programme; its aim is simply the repudiation of all speculative thought — including, of course, its own should it produce any in the course of its work. When the linguistic errors of speculative philosophy had all, or any rate the main ones, been exposed, the task of logical analysis would be at an end. Since it owes its *raison d'être* to speculation, it can have no reason, once it has nailed up the speculative coffin, for continuing to exist. As with modern armaments when an international crisis calms down, it is a highly per.

fected weapon with nothing to shoot at. Students that decided to enter upon a university course in philosophy would find themselves in the paradoxical position of having to study a history of NonSense, either explicitly expounded by their professors as such or implanted as a disease to be removed later. This has been almost consciously realised by one logical analyst, who has made the following revealing statement :[1] "Philosophical analysis is a sophisticated product. It does not result from simply thinking about the meanings of sentences : you might spend a lifetime replacing obscure sentences by lucid ones, and yet not be a philosopher. Before reaching the analytic attitude to philosophy we spend a considerable time studying the classical philosophers, thereby accustoming ourselves to ways of looking at the world which are very remote from ordinary spheres of thought. Even if we subsequently condemn the doctrines of the celebrated philosophers of the past as NonSensical [my spelling], they have clearly formed the background of our philosophical thinking. Thus analytic philosophy, however demure it may now be in relation to common sense, has a scandalous ancestry". The relation between the student, his professor, and their subject has been expressed by another logical analyst as follows : "The right method of philosophy would be this. To say nothing except what can be said, *i. e.* the propositions of natural science, *i.e.* something that has nothing to do with philosophy : and then always, when someone else wished to say something metaphysical, to demonstrate to him that he had given no meaning to certain signs in his propositions. This method would be unsatisfying to the other — he would not have the feeling that we were teaching him philosophy

(1)   A. E. Duncan-Jones, "Does Philosophy Analyse Common Sense?", Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume, No. XVI, London, 1937, p. 154.

— but it would be the only strictly correct method."[1]   We
may thus picture a scene in which the professor of philosophy
is sitting in the professorial study, no longer lecturing but inter-
viewing potential speculative philosophers, who would humbly
confess to him of having thought of a speculative idea, where-
upon he would knock the NonSense out of them.   Over
the mantlepiece the shade of David Hume would say : "If
we take in our hand any volume; of divinity or school meta-
physics, for instance; let us ask, *Does it contain any abstract
reasoning concerning quantity or number?* No. *Does it contain any
experimental reasoning concerning the nature of matter of fact and
existence?* No. Commit it then to the flames: for it can contain
nothing but sophistry and illusion."[2]

Let us revert to the nature of speculative thought from
the point of view of the speculative philosopher.   It was de-
fined, in Chapter II, by the Principle of Transcendence
that is to say, it is independent of all sense-experience.   Does
it not follow, then, from the very meaning of "logical analy-
sis", for which words must have empirical sense or meaning
and for which statements must have empirical translations
or verifications, that *transcendent statements are NonSense* ?   In
a word, this follows from the logico-analytical meaning of
"meaning".   The whole of the logico-analytical treatment
is thus reduced to a single statement — and that is a tautology.
Surely, then, it should not have been necessary to take such
a roundabout route to discover the nature of speculation, which
we should have borne in mind all along.   It is true that the

---

(1)   Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, London, 1922,
6.53.

(2)   David Hume, *Enquiry concerning the Human Understanding*, ed. by
Selby-Bigge, Oxford, p. 165.

procedure has thrown the description into the striking form that speculation is NonSense — but only in a special, technical sense of "NonSense". The most that logical analysis can be said to achieve, therefore, is to redirect our attention to something we knew, or should have known, already. Hence there would be nothing in the characterisation of his work as NonSense that would be repugnant to a speculative philosopher — it would even, perhaps, be his boast. He would stress that speculation has always been claimed to transcend sense-experience, and that it must *ipso facto* be incapable of being defined in terms of the ordinary meanings of words or of empirical verifications. He might even be tempted to adopt a technical phrase of his own to signify that speculation transcends sense-experience and the ordinary sense of words, and say that speculative statements were *TransSense*. What, then, would be the difference between the logico-analytical judgment that speculation is NonSense and the speculative one that it is TransSense ? The one would mean that speculation could not be defined or verified in terms of sense-experience, and the other that it went beyond such a test. The reader will decide for himself what this difference amounts to.

Since logical analysis is non-speculative and non-empirical, it must offer no assertion and merely contain tautology, and we should therefore expect no more out of an application of it than we put in . Thus it is not an unrivalled technique for discovering something undiscoverable in any other way. It is simply *one way of putting a point* — an intellectual expression of the disbelief of the present age in some idols of the past. Of the speculative position, it deals with but one of the main aspects, and that the less important; for it concentrates on the mechanism and ignores the cause. Perhaps it does no more than define the kind of person that readily sees things by its means. Doubtless the attactivencess that many have found

in the method lies in its logical rigour, which has something akin to the potency of mathematics, and to the scientific angle of approach, which it at times possesses. But to these must be added its negative character; for to be a logical analyst is not merely to be a logician, but a logician with an anti-speculative bias.

Since, in the last resort, logical analysis fails to confute speculation, the method stands for nothing more objective than a demand for a philosophy that does not transcend sense-experience. This demand may be reasonable, but the truth of what is demanded cannot be provided by logical analysis : that is to say, a speculative philosopher would not have his position logically disproved. Logical analysis is attempting the impossible task of using logical argument against a psychological attitude.

Now let us consider the merits of logical analysis on its own account. This necessitates grouping together the various processes and entities to which the name is applied, in order to sift their importance.

(1) When one statement is translated by another one, as explained in Chapters IV and V, the translation is called the logical analysis of the given statement. Here logical analysis is a certain result, very like the definiens which gives the definition of a word. We may refer to logical analyses of this kind as "Translations".

(2) Logical analysis is a method, which has five forms : (*a*) one that is used to discover logical analyses in sense (1); (*b*) one whose purpose is clarification is general; and (*c*) one that aims at removing ambiguity; (*d*) one that determines meaning by empirical tests; and (*e*) one that determines the existence of meaning by empirical tests. We may call these, respectively, "Translation Analysis," "Critical Analysis",

"Merely Verbal Analysis", "Verification" and "Verifiability"

(3) Logical analysis is a philosophical position, (a) whose temper is realist, empirical, and antagonistic to speculation, and (b) whose psychological counterpart is behaviourism. This we may describe as "Phenomenalism".

It is convenient to discuss these in a different order.

(3a) There exists no statement to this effect in logico-analytical writings. Before his logico-analytical technique was matured, Professor Moore, in his earlier writings was a realist and an empiricist; whereas now, though these elements are undoubtedly present, he is more correctly to be described as a logical analyst. But even though these features do not strictly constitute what meant is by the philosophy of logical analysis, it would be difficult to conceive of a logical analyst's not having this outlook.

(3b) While it is unlikely that logical analysts would disagree with the statements of (3a), they might feel considerable surprise at the idea of being classed as behaviourists. Several reasons can be given for attributing this feature to them. First, one branch, that of the logical positivists, has worked its way resolutely to a form of behaviourism; second, Professor Moore has defined a mental event as being essentially *conscious*,[1] and this defines a form of behaviourism, though of a less extreme kind than Watson's; and third, the behaviourist quality of all logico-analytic writing is readily observable, in spite of the official opposition on their part to behaviourist psychology. This is not the place to substantiate this view; but if I am right in my claim that logical analyses of speculation fail to include its main conceptions, there should be little difficulty

---

(1) G. E. Moore, "The Subject Matter of Psychology", *Proc.Arist. Soc.*, N.S. Vol. X, London, 1909-10; there is nothing to indicate whether he has changed his view since.

in seeing that this is due to viewing it with a behaviourist attitude.

(2c) *Merely Verbal Analysis.* This is as old as philosophy — at any rate it goes back to Socrates; but while it is a necessary preliminary to clear thinking, there is nothing in it that is very novel. Now it is worth remarking that a great deal of what is written under the heading of logical analysis is nothing more than discussion of ambiguities consisting chiefly in lists of senses of words, and that many writers make their writing unnecessarily cumbersome by superfluous precision about senses of words when these would be obvious from context and when ambiguity would have no misleading implications. It is possible that these two reasons have much to do with the lack of sympathy many philosophers feel towards logical analysis; for, if the detection of ambiguity is overstressed, more important elements that really constitute the subject may be missed.

(1) and (2a) Translations and translation-analysis constitute logical analysis of one kind regarded as a new departure in philosophy. (2b) Critical analysis is subsidiary. (1) is concerned with definition, in the precise and novel form brought to birth and developed by Professor Moore. (2a) consists simply in any means that leads to likely logical analyses (translations) of statements. Thus if a statement is difficult to analyse, various alternatives may be proposed, and reasons of many kinds may be brought forward for rejecting some of the proposed analyses and accepting others, and any discussion on these lines makes use of the *method* of logical analysis. To ask about the value of translations and translation-analysis is, roughly speaking, to ask about the value of definition. But logical analysis is in an important way wider than definition : as was explained in Part II, numbers of words and phrases (incomplete symbols) cannot be *defined,* and all that can

be done is to define a complete sentence containing such words or phrases; but it is, unfortunately, quite contrary to our usage of language to talk of *defining sentences* (we define words phrases, and expressions but not sentences), and so the activity of logical analysis cannot be said to consist in definition, because our usage of this word in not so wide as what logical analysis covers. It is customary in logico-analytic circles to talk not of the *definition* of a sentence or statement but of the analysis of a sentence or statement. Now analogous to the words "definiendum" and "definiens" it will be convenient to introduce the words "transferendum" for a statemant to be analysed and "transferens" for the statement that gives the analysis. To ask about the value of translations and translation-analysis becomes therefore a question of estimating the value of finding a transferens. Of this it seems evident that whenever the correct transferens is obvious enough to be decided upon with certainty, it gives no fresh information; and if translation, on the only occasions when it can be carried out, tells us nothing we did not know before, the idea suggests itself that *a transferens is only demanded where we have failed to understand.* Since in such cases a correct transferens cannot be discovered, the demand for it means not that research is being done but that ignorance is being registered. Accordingly so far from providing philosophy with beneficial results, logical analysis, whether equated with transferentia or the method of seeking them, is an expression of defeat.

(2*b*) *Critical Analysis.* This consists in seeking translations, not in the sense of exact transferentia, but in the sense of restatements of transferenda. Thus if a question raised may be translated into several separate questions, the orthodox logico-analytic view would be that the questioner meant only one of them and required the transferens of that one, whereas according to a broader interpretation under critical analysis

he might be credited with meaning each of the several questions; and the answer would consist, not in giving a transferens of each, but in pointing out how many questions there were and what they were, for this would probably suffice. This procedure obviously can be valuable, though one would have imagined it could have been hit upon by many a clear thinker without the development of an entire new movement in philosophy.

It is also quite possible that critical analysis describes the form of analysis used by Professor Broad : his work, though analytic, is very unlike that of typical logical analysts whose activities consist of giving translations or translation analysis.

(*2d*) *Verification*. This method has been used by its practitioners mainly and perhaps exclusively to find the "cash-value" of speculative statements; it thus amounts as a rule to an attack on NonSense. But it could obviously be used as a means of clarifying obscure statements on any subject. In so doing, of course, it renders clearer only the objective realities of a situation, but throws no light on what an obscure author meant. (*2e*) *Verifiability*. This is simply a precise form of the Principle of Empiricism : it is a prerequisite of a large part of scientific activity. As here used, verification differs from verifiability in being an attempt to apply the principle of verifiability outside the sphere of science.

What, then, are the valuable elements in these activities ? One valuable element clearly is critical analysis; but, though it may have become more refined, it is not new. What is new is the treatment of definition, translation-analysis, and verification; but, if the argument of this chapter is right, these amount to the arbitrary fiat that speculation is really NonSense, which is only a new way of saying what speculative thinkers held or ought to have held — that metaphysics is TransSense. It would seem, then, that logical analysis,

as outlined so far, has completed its mission in directing our attention to what we ought to have known, or at least in redirecting our attention to what we knew but had ceased to recognise. The methods — particularly that of verification — can, however, always have one valuable function : they can act as a prophylactic precept guarding us against confusing the transcendent with the empirical; we can, when writing a piece of philosophy, know more clearly when we are crossing the borders of the empirical, and if we wish to be speculative we shall be so deliberately and with our eyes open.

Let us inspect the value of verification more clearly. Suppose you speak about the *group mind*. You will be asked to give a list of typical facts, or alternatively a list of typical statements, that lead you to use this phrase. You may say that the behaviour of people individually and in small sets, such as the family, does not include all forms of behaviour, for people in large groups behave differently. Then, replies the verificationist, by the group mind you mean simply that in the mass people show new behaviour ? You qualify that you mean more than this, for the features of group behaviour have a sort of unity of motive and purpose resembling that found in the behaviour of individuals separately. This is unobjectionable, replies the verificationist, if you are using your phrase as a short way of expressing all this. But are you sure that you are not hypostatising the phrase, supposing there exists a substance called "group mind" in the same way as individual minds exist, or, to draw a crude picture, imagining a jelly-like substance on a large scale which has the group properties you have described ? Again, suppose that, like Spinoza, you base a whole system upon a phrase such as *causa sui*, what facts or statements lead you to use this form of words ? You may say that there is a logical contradiction in making any other supposition. For the sake of argument, replies the

verificationist, let that pass and consider the matter from another angle; even if you are right, I find it difficult to understand your phrase, so can you give me any examples to show how you are using it ? Well, you say, Pasteur used some such phrase when he conducted his famous experiments to disprove spontaneous generation; organisms developed for which there was no known cause, though it is true that he succeeded in finding the cause. Then we are still without an example ? Yes, but Pasteur disproved a proposition, and it couldn't have been disproved unless it had a meaning. You mean, then, that it is intelligible that some organisms should not have existed at a certain date and later existed though there was no cause of this change ? You would agree that other things already existed and that there was a date before the spontaneous generation occurred ? In this example, yes. But would this illustrate your use of *causa sui*, because for your system you wish to say that the *causa sui* is non-temporal, that it did not begin to exist in time, and that nothing else preceded it in time ? True, the illustration is not exact, but you have explained the meaning of *causa sui* for me reasonably well. On the contrary, I have used sentences to replace the short phrase, but how are you to explain their meaning any more easily than you can explain the phrase itself ?

This way of putting the matter may show that the method of verification forces one to seek facts or statements underlying the use of strange concepts, and forces one to consider whether such concepts are short ways of describing quite mundane facts or whether they stand for new kinds of entities with which people have hitherto been unfamiliar. If one persists on the latter path one is at least more face to face with the need to make the new entities communicable.

On the whole, this procedure, which comes from the Wittgenstein approach rather than from the others, constitutes

what is newest and of chief value in the new logical methods. While it can be of value in the way described, that does not, however, commit us to the more extreme uses to which most logical positivists put it.

CHAPTER X.

Verification as a Method of Persuasion.

Some logical analysts have themselves begun to feel that the methods described in the foregoing chapters, which were developed between about 1925 and 1937, were ineffectual. There seem to be two reasons for this. Firstly, in spite of all the reduction of metaphysics to NonSense speculative thinkers remained unconvinced — in the previous chaper I believe I have shown that they had some reason for refusing to give way. Secondly there is a suspicion, internal to the schools of logical analysts, that the methods employed themselves gave rise to NonSensical questions about the meaning of "meaning". We know that a typical treatment of "A is brother of B" is said to mean *A is brother of B and has a parent in common with B.* Now this type of analysis has served as a pattern of all that an analysis should be; but the difficulty is that it is effective only with very simple examples, and, indeed, only with examples that have nothing to do with philosophy — the method has failed to yield the solution of any philosophical problem, though tried now for some years by some of the acutest minds in many countries. Perhaps the reason for the failure is that meaning must here be conceived as a *thing*, and therefore as a thing to which we may add or subtract if the proposed analysis is not quite correct. That this is wrong is shown by the failure of the phenomenalist analysis of perception : in this a statement about, say, a table is analysed into an infinite number of statements about sense-data — so that the complete meaning can never be given.

If methods of logical analysis are to be of any value, some alteration becomes needed. Translation into the formal mode of speech or verification must be used not to put the speculative thinker in his place but to effect a gradual re-orientation in his approach, which is done partly by recognising that he is in some degree right — more right than the behaviouristic logical analyst for instance. The function of logical analysis therefore comes to be a kind of logical therapy.

This notion of a logical therapeutic method is a somewhat surprising one in view of the history of the subject, which began with a puritanical regard for truth, precision, and accuracy, and now in its new conception it is a means of controlling a philosopher's thoughts — almost a kind of suggestion. However surprising it may be, the notion comes from strict logico-analytic sources.*

Though speculative questions are essentially NonSensical and the application of logical analysis to them is intended to demonstrate this, it is possible to ask for further information about the nature of a speculative question and what is the nature of an appropriate (*i.e.* logico-analytic) reply : even if a speculative question is NonSense, it expresses *perplexity* and to demonstrate the aspect of NonSense will not remove the perplexity. To put the matter otherwise, it is necessary to find out (1) what a philosophic (*i.e.* speculative) puzzle is, (2) what a philosophic (*i.e.* logico-analytic and possibly some-

(*) John Wisdom, "Philosophical Perplexity", *Proc. Arist. Soc.*, N. S. Vol. XXXVII, London, 1936-7. The exposition and discussion that follows is based mainly on this paper, which is the outcome of discussions between Mr. Wisdom and Professor Wittgenstein; also I take the liberty of using some ideas put forward by Professor Ryle, the chairman at the meeting when the paper mentioned was read. The new method is applied by Mr. Wisdom in a long series of papers entitled "Other Minds", beginning *Mind*, N.S. Vol XXIX, No. 196, London, 1940; these are likely to be understood only after a study of "Philosophical Perplexity".

thing more) solution is, and (3) what a philosophic mistake (*i.e.* speculation based on a linguistic mistake) is. Evidently one can see a puzzle without knowing how to resolve it or what the mistake is; so that finding a mistake means seeing a puzzle *and* knowing how to resolve it. The question is, does the unravelling of NonSense in a puzzle show how to resolve it ? The logical analyst thinks it does, but according to the present development this has to be done in a certain therapeutic way — a logical demonstration on the blackboard would not succeed. This belief is, however, open to doubt, and it must be fully considered later; but at the moment the exposition of the supposed therapy must proceed.

The general theme may be expressed as follows : We logical analysts have now discovered a large number of linguistic confusions and we know the main types under which these fall. Accordingly you may make any statement you please provided you take care that it will not be understood to imply statements that rest on any of these confusions : we allow a wide degree of latitude, we are very tolerant, in the use of language, provided you guard against the misconceptions that usually arise in philosophers' minds as a result of such language. For example, the word "sense-datum" is not an untechnical English word, it was introduced into philosophy for a certain purpose, and some logical analysts hold that neither this word nor a synonym is needed in philosophy; but you may use it if you wish, provided firstly you remember that you must not talk of *the* meaning of the word as if there was only one meaning, or suppose you are unfolding anyi nformation about the universe by means of your definition, for this is but a recommendation that you give for the use of the word, and provided secondly your recommendation is enlightening and not misleading. The usual kind of definition of "sense-datum" or *"recommendation"* is liable to sug-

gest that sense-data are a special sort of thing, *extremely* thin coloured pictures, and thus liable to raise puzzles, such as "How are sense-data related to material things?"[1] This must be avoided.

One point that emerges from this is that perfect translation of statements, as described in Chapter IV, is no longer attempted. None the less that endeavour was not wasted effort, for it led to the discovery on logico-analytic grounds that speculation was NonSense, and this conclusion is still a tenet and premiss of logical analysis. The new development is due to a matured certainty of this tenet, so that the only activity left to the logical analyst is to try to get other philosophers to grasp it and to prevent each other from uttering NonSense in the course of their work. Evidently it is chiefly to their colleagues that latitude in the use of language is granted, *i.e.* to those that will appreciate what NonSense they must avoid and guard against implying whenever they make a statement.

The most important feature of the new latitude is that *one is now permitted to make false or NonSensical statements for a certain purpose :* it is allowable to utter a specific NonSense statement in order to manœuvre a fellow-philosopher away from a position of believing in another NonSense statement. This notion requires expansion. Let us suppose, for example, that a philosopher is talking to you of his belief that mathematical propositions, *e.g.* 7 plus 5 = 12, are eternal and necessary truths, or that physical objects such as tables and chairs are the unity of the sense-data they present. In the face of what you believe to be NonSense propositions, you no longer try to make this plain to your opponent by attempting to translate these statements after the manner of Chapters IV

(1) Wisdom, "Philosophical Perplexity", as cited, p. 75.

and V so as to prove, when no translation can be effected, that they are indeed NonSense, for this method usually fails to convince, but you talk in your turn to your opponent of NonSense propositions that are *"opposite"* *to his* : you say that mathematical propositions are, on the contrary, merely rules of grammar, and that physical objects are not entities that exist over and above sense-data. There are several points to be dwelt upon: the fact that your replies are (a) NonSense, (b) in what way this is so, (c) in what way your opponent's statements are NonSense, and (d) your success in drawing attention to this. (a) (b) Your replies are NonSense, *i.e.* philosophicially mislead, if they are taken to mean, respectively, that mathematical propositions are *exactly like* rules of grammar and syntax, and that physical objects do not *really exist;* (c) your opponent's statements are NonSense if they are taken to imply, respectively, that mathematical propositions are true independently of all language and that physical objects are a kind of brick and mortar cementing sense-data together; and (d) you draw attention to these errors by pointing, respectively, to a *certain likeness* between mathematical propositions and grammar, and that physical objects do not exist in the way that sense-data do.

On the other hand, should you overstep your function and take your replies too literally, your opponent's statements could be used against you in an equally therapeutic way : if you regard mathematical propositions as consisting of rules of grammar alone, or physical objects as mere bundle of sense-data, then the speculative philosopher may try therapy by asserting that mathematical propositions are really eternal and necessary truths, thereby drawing attention to an *unlikeness* between them and rules of grammar, and that physical objects are really a unity over and above sense-data, thereby drawing your attention to the fact that there is more in the

world than sense-data.

Evidently statement and counter statement are "equally" NonSensical, though each serves to protect us from the evils of the other. It might be useful to coin an expression and talk of the two sets of NonSense statements as *"mutually corrective"*. They are in some curious way "opposites". They cannot, since they are NonSense, consist of logically contrary propositions; so probably they express opposite mental states of mind, for otherwise they could scarcely be mutually corrective.

The exposition may at this point be summarised as follows : "philosophical statements mislead when by the use of like expressions for different cases, they suggest likenesses which do not exist, and by the use of different expressions for like cases, they conceal likenesses which do exist. Philosophical theories are illuminating in a corresponding way, namely when they suggest or draw attention to a terminology which reveals likenesses and differences concealed by ordinary language."[1]

I would suggest, however, that the likenesses or unlikenesses that we fail to observe are covered up, not by ordinary language, but by psychological inhibitions which manifest themselves in misleading language : in other words that linguistic errors are not the *cause* of philosophical mistakes but effects of whatever does cause these. *Of the total situation involving a speculative belief, it is somewhat arbitrary to assume that one specific feature, namely the mode of expression, should be the cause of the whole situation; it would be a more reasonable working hypothesis to assume that this feature was but one of may requiring explanation.*

This highly unusual view of philosophical perplexity may well perplex the philosopher that has not closely followed

---

(1) *Id.*, p. 76.

the intricate development of logical analysis, though the matter should be intelligible against the back-ground of Chapters III — V. It may be some help, however, to remark to the philosopher chiefly accustomed to speculation that any difficulty in appreciating the logico-analytic point is probably due to unfamiliarity with the usual illustrations : the general idea may be expounded and exemplified as in Chapters III — V, but a full realisation of the case is probably to be gained only by observing the thesis in large numbers of examples, for logico-analytical discussions are conducted usually by the use of special instances rather than by general arguments. Moreover all philosophical criticism of the logico-analytic point will presuppose the speculative position.

In addition to the two examples already discussed it is worth while adding one more — the problem of induction. This subject is best introduced by distinguishing sharply between the rationalist view, followed by most idealists and by some that would call themselves realists, and the empirical view, favoured as a rule by logical analysts. For present purposes this over-simplification need not matter and it will serve to show that the intellectualist desires to justify induction while the empiricist — Hume and Ramsey, for example, —believes it cannot be justified . Both sides start from the wish to know how what has held in the past will continue to hold in the future, both agree that no guarantee to this effect is

---

(*) The converse is, of course, no less true, that logico-analytic criticism of speculation presupposes the logico-analytic position.

(**) See Wisdom, *Op. cit.*, pp. 85-6. This paper is rich in examples, and it is not my aim to do justice to them all. I hope that my exposition will bring out the main point fairly, show where the difficulty of comprehending it lies, and make it possible for philosophers of speculative bent to follow the argument of the above paper, which without an introductory exposition of some kind would probably be found very difficult.

to be found in the facts themselves, and that all that had proved most certain in the past might turn out differently in the future.* What then of the difference between these two schools ?

The intellectualist asserts the truth of a speculative principle about the uniform functioning of nature, and believes that something of the kind is presupposed by all science; the empiricist denies this on the ground that any such principle would make induction so certain — transforming it in fact into *deduction* — that it would no longer be possible to entertain doubt about the future working of a law that held in the past, and this contradicts the obvious fact that the future may quite possibily not follow the laws of the past. In order to stress his point the empiricist asserts that there cannot be certainty of the future but only *probability*. In this way he is drawing attention to the NonSense proposition that induction is really in its inner nature deduction; but he achieves this success at the expense of the NonSense implication that we cannot really count on the laws of nature holding good in the future, or "that the scientists have been found out at last, that our confidence in our most careful research workers is entirely misplaced, their arguments being no better than those of the savage." [1] If the empiricist goes to the extent of inferring that "Even the best established scientific results are nothing but specially successful superstitions", [2] he may need the therapeutic influence of the more openly speculative standpoint.

(*) There is, however, a difference in attitude roughly summarised by saying that the intellectualist would be much more *surprised* at a failure in nature's uniformity : the empiricist would accept such a happening quite tranquilly, but the rationalist would not inwardly believe it possible, for in his view it is logically possible only by reason of a superficial contemplation of reality without regard to the great inductive principles.

(1) Wisdom, *Op. cit.*, p. 85.

(2) *Id.*, p. 86.

Accordingly in this phase of logical analysis its followers hold that philosophy arises from a state of perplexity, that all philosophical perplexity is NonSense, that there are no genuine philosophic problems, that there are no genuine philosophic answers, but that there are philosophical perplexities and problems that contain half-truths, and philosophic answers (equally NonSensical) that also contain half-truths : NonSense statement containing a half-truth and NonSense counter-statement containing a half-truth have a therapeutic effect upon each other.

Evidently in philosophic activity of this kind there is no ambition to combine — after the manner of Hegel or otherwise — the half-truths into a whole truth without falsity; for, on logico-analytic lines the idea that there is a whole truth without falsity is itself NonSense and at best a half-truth. You make the kind of NonSense statement that will have the right effect on your questioner. The sole aim of the activity is *to manœuvre the opponent into withdrawing his question.* Since even the philosophical handling of NonSense is NonSense and is but a means of removing NonSense from existence, *philosophical answers must make themselves superfluous—they are nothing once their task is performed.* Philosophy as a whole consists of a kind of wart and nitric acid to wear it away, and success will be attained when not even the nitric acid remains.[1]

It is to be observed that logical therapeutics is to be carried out by linguistic methods of half-truths and NonSense alone — the cure must not be effected, for instance, by means of blows on the head or by hypnotising the questioner.[2] Because the method is thus mildly psychological, it has more promise

---

(1) *Cf.* Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, London, 1922, 7.

(2) *Cf.* Wisdom, *Op. cit.*, p. 77.

of success than the older methods of logical analysis; it is broad-er in scope and outlook than they.

It is interesting to reflect upon two of the poles of logical analysis : Professor Moore held that certain commonsense statements were indubitably true and that we all know them to be true, but also held that their precise translation-analy-ses when not known were capable of being ascertained; the logical positivists on the other hand usually deny the first con-tention, and instead of ascertaining the meaning of a com-monsense statement simply prescribe it. For example, Profes-sor Moore would know that you were angry though he would not be easily satisfied with any proposed translation-analysis of this; the logical positivists would regard it as probable but uncertain and would prescribe its meaning in terms of facial movements and bodily actions present and to be expected. Now the new method here discussed seems to accept the first con-tention of Professor Moore's while denying the second; in con-sequence it avoids the prescription of meaning and falling into a dilemma between holding behaviourism or transcendentalism. It uses the principle of verification, then, not to give meanings but as a recommendation against speculation; and since its function is not to provide meanings, the problem is no longer one of stating meaning as behaviourism plus something else that cannot be found. Moreover, the dilemma of whether the principle of verification is *a priori* or empirical — for it obviously cannot be either—is resolved by its being given the status of an arbitrary definition, or, as it would now be called, a *recommendation*. This was the point to which I was leading on independent grounds in the previous chapter; it is a point that is explicitly recognised in the newest form of logical ana-lysis.

This development is so new and so little has been written upon it, that confident criticism would be premature; it is

more appropriate to mention the difficulties one finds in it.

(i) To date I have failed to understand how dilemmas are avoided; I cannot escape the feeling that the desire to ask speculative questions is suppressed rather than satisfied.

(ii) It is alleged that the method works well in practice. Supposing that it works well in a certain sample of cases, does the speculative desire not show itself repeatedly in newly devised cases ?

(iii) The method seems to me to reveal at most a mechanism by which speculation comes about; but knowledge of the mechanism will not eradicate metaphysical growth unless the driving force is discovered — just as war cannot be stopped by knowledge of the economic mechanism involved unless we can find out the driving force that animates the economic mechanism.

I therefore approach metaphysics from a fresh point of view in Part III.

Part III.

The Psychocentric Hypothesis

"Several moralists have recommended it as an excellent method of becoming acquainted with our own hearts, and knowing our progress in virtue, to recollect our dreams in a morning, and examine them with the same rigour, that we would our most serious and most deliberate actions. Our character is the same throughout, say they, and appears best where artifice, fear, and policy have no place, and men can neither be hypocrites with themselves nor others. The generosity, or baseness of our temper, our meekness or cruelty, our courage or pusilanimity, influence the fictions of the imagination with the most unbounded liberty, and discover themselves in the most glaring colours. In like manner, I am persuaded, there might be several useful discoveries made from a criticism of the fictions of the ancient philosophy, concerning *substances, and substantial forms, and accidents, and occult qualities;* which, however unreasonable and capricious, have a very intimate connexion with the principles of human nature". — Hume.

CHAPTER XI

The Significance* of NonSense.

"Language disguises the thought; so that from the external form of the clothes one cannot infer the form of the thought they clothe, because the external form of the clothes is constructed with quite another object than to let the form of the body be recognised." — Ludwig Wittgenstein.

In judging metaphysics to be NonSense, there is an important point that logical analysts have failed to notice.

It is surely very significant that the philosophers who talked NonSense talked it fluenty, appeared to know what they themselves meant, and seemed to understand the sayings and writings of others. They would nod to one another, frown, or ask for elucidations, as the NonSense flowed; one piece of NonSense would appear more obvious than another; some NonSense might seem unacceptable and false. Indeed no difference of behaviour can be detected between the discussions of speculative philosophers and those of logical analysts. I am far from inferring, however, that their outpourings must have made sense — it is assumed they were NonSense in the sense defined. But I propose to accept it as a *fact* that these philosophers did *understand* themselves and one another, and to ask what "understand" means in this context; for there is nothing foolhardy in supposing that there is a sense of "understand" such that one can understand NonSense.

This point may call to mind an older one : when certain philosophers explained away their difficulties by saying that the world of sense was an illusion, they sometimes forgot that

(*) In this chapter this word is used as a rule in its ordinary wide sense, and not in the special sense of Part II.

the illusion remained and required an explanation. So here, speculative essays may be dismissed as NonSense; but it is extraordinary NonSense, and like the heroes in Valhalla it survives the onslaught. It may be dismissed as NonSense, but as NonSense it remains, and as NonSense it can, apparently, *be understood*.

That there are many strange senses of "understand" can be seen from such statements as "He 'understands' children" or from the despair of a certain type of person who says, "Nobody 'understands' me" These two usages, together that one to be considered here, are all different ; but they have one feature in common, and that is that they involve something psychological over and above the psychological mechanism involved in any ordinary kind of understanding. It seems that what is required is a critical analysis of *I understand Non-Sense*, the material for which would be given by *psycho*-analysis. But first what was the function of speculative philosophy ?

I will begin by stressing two distinct ways in which we can use sentences to express facts. I should like here to try a method of twofold exposition, first presenting the matter without definition or logical care, and second by means of definitions framed with a certain logical exactitude. The first way may be called "rhetorical", since the meaning to be conveyed in this way is to be grasped through the use of literary or rhetorical subtleties of expression — which will render the exposition liable to logical inaccuracy. It seems very likely that the bulk of philosophy has been written in a combination of languages, the rhetorical and the logical; the extreme difficulty of expressing certain ideas in logical language alone has inevitably led philosophers to use rhetorical or literary means in order to express themselves, and ·when they noticed the logical inadequacies of their expositions they would try to

rectify them by an admixture of logical exposition. The result was usually a hybrid language, and it is for this reason perhaps that many philosophers have had bad styles. Now many to-day, being very much under the influence of the logical puri-fication of expression that largely constitutes logical analysis, are apt to see nothing but difficulty and obscurity in ther he-torical or literary style and to use for their writings the logical language only. But it seems to me that the rhetorical style has considerable advantages : it is possible to convey a mean-ing more clearly and more as a whole, more rapidly and more shortly by means of it than by logical expression, for our languages are designed to convey meaning at the expense of correct logical form. But in spite of this boon one or two vital points should be stressed : it is not for a moment suggested that philosophers should return to the use of historical modes of expression, *i.e.* should substitute rhetorical for logical style; all that is maintained is that the rhetorical literary method can be used as an extremely useful means to an end, and when that end — the conveying of meaning — is achieved, logical rigour of expression ought to be introduced as a check. Some that have seen the full effect of logical analysis in its use may prefer to put results in its special way; but there is no reason against our employing other devices, designed to facilitate certain stages of philosophic procedure. Accordingly in mak-ing my attempt to expound in both ways I do not desire to relinquish logic and to return to vagueness: I am separat-ing philosophic language into two languages, which will func-tion in supplementary capacities. If a cross-heading is given to indicate clearly which method of exposition is being used, then the reader may pass over a section if he pleases without necessarily losing the thread of the argument. Perhaps some may be anxious to make comparisons; for philosophers of the more traditional type freely admit to finding the language

of logical analysis unintelligible, while logical-analysts—an inevi-
table of result ttheir training—seldom show signs of comprehen-
sion when confronted with a rhetorical oɪ a literary exposition.*

Before continuing the main topic, an example may be
given of rhetorical exposition. Concepts for him (it was asser-
ted) were at that time about as objective as they could pos-
sibly be. Now this brief sentence does not give exact details
and refinements of the gentleman's views on concepts; but
it gives in a flash his whole outlook with regard to them : you
have a peg on which to hang further reading — you know
what to look for. You read the sequel to consolidate, modify,
and to gain increased precision — you do *not* read on with
half your attention taken up in trying to discover what thesis
is being propounded. In this case a logical style would require
you to make it plain that to assert that concepts were objective
was to assert first of all that they existed when not thought
of, and also that this assertion could have at least two different
analyses. It might firstly be equivalent to the assertion that
if they had been thought of in an interval in which they were
not in fact thought of then they *would* have existed. It might
secondly be equivalent not to this but to the assertion that
the concepts exist when *not* thought of in exactly the same
sense of "exist" as when they *are* thought of. Again it might
mean that concepts existed in Plato's world of Ideas (which
would require further analysis). One of these analyses might
express the position required. I submit that though this kind
of expression and definition is essential to many — and pos-
sibly the important — parts of philosophy, it is not *always*
required or even the best kind of language to use.

---

* In saying that I will give a rhetorical exposition I lay no claim
to a capacity to produce a high-class literary composition or to write a
classic of English prose; but what I mean may be left to the reader as
a first exercise in understanding a rhetorical exposition.

Rhetorical exposition of a distinction about facts.

In communicating with one another we are concerned with objective facts : our utterances, as it were, express the facts they appear to express. Thus "The sugar is on the table" expresses an objective fact of a kind important in communication. A subjective fact on the other hand is one about the person that asserts it to be a fact — but this fact is not obviously a fact about him. Thus "the barrel-organist is at the door" may express a subjective fact of the sort that is unprintable in a book on philosophy though usual in books on psychology. It is important to note that this sentence can also express an objective fact — indeed it is probable most sentences do; but, owing to a certain difficulty which will come to light later an example cannot readily be given of a sentence that expresses a subjective fact only.

Now we wish to know more about the differences between these two kinds of facts. The main striking difference is of a psychological kind : it is not that a subjective fact is a fact about a person while an objective fact is not — for indeed the sentence "I like sugar" expresses an objective fact, though it is about a person. The point is that this fact is obviously about a person, whereas to be a subjective fact it would have to be about a person certainly, but *not obviously*, about him. The psychological difference between the two kinds of facts consists in this, that the objective fact is *impersonal*, while the subjective fact is *personal*. This psychological use of "personal" is common to ordinary speech and probably everybody will recognise what it means. The unprintable fact to the effect that the barrel-organist is at the door is very personal. The mere fact that he occupies a certain place in the universe at a certain time is quite impersonal.

It is clear that there is no difference between an objective fact and an impersonal one; nor between a subjective fact

and a personal one. But one terminology is more useful for the introduction of the topic and the other, owing to its psychological content, conveys the underlying distinction more clearly. What I wish to put forward is that speculative philosophy makes utterances (i) that have all the appearances of expressing impersonal facts about the universe, (ii) that do not really do so, but only express personal facts about philosophers, and (iii) whose deceptive appearance is not obvious and cannot be discovered by "untrained" introspection.*

Criticism of this rhetorical exposition.

The distinction between subjective and objective facts is wholly unsatisfactory from a logical point of view, for the circuitously expressed subjective facts are just as much *objective* facts in the universe as any other. For suppose I express the unprintable fact about the barrel-organist directly in solid Anglo-Saxon, it is then an objective fact. Thus one and the same fact can be subjective or objective according to the kind of way it may happen to be expressed. Again a sentence about money — to take an example from psycho-analysis — may be a completely unconscious expression about dirt and therefore express a subjective fact. Yet after psycho-analytic treatment the person concerned may realise what he really wanted to express and so directly express the fact about dirt : this fact would then be objective. Here once more we find the same fact simultaneously subjective and objective.

Moreover the distinction between personal and impersonal facts is nearly as bad — and for the same reasons. The personal and unprintable fact about the barrel-organist is no less a personal fact when it is directly expressed in potent Anglo-Saxon and when it is by definition impersonal.

(*) It is perhaps worth remarking that this view distinguishes philosophy from poetry, for the one deceives in a way the other never does.

Though *logically* unsound, these distinctions are *psycho-logically* sound — a truth that accounts (1) for the fact that the plain man would probably understand them, (2) for the fact that practising psychologists use them, and (3) for the unpopularity of logical analysis, which *replaces psychologically sound distinctions by logically sound ones and thereby nearly always by psychologically undesirable ones.* The broad traditional senses of "subjective" and "objective" were such that any fact that referred to the subject was subjective, and all others were objective : thus a perfectly objective fact such as the fact that I like sugar was by definition subjective. The reason for this discrepancy no doubt is to be found in man's modesty or conceit : *he* is not part of the universe, *he* is not worthy of being an element in facts of the universe — facts about him are *merely* subjective. On the other hand there is the obvious implication that man thus *withdraws* from the universe, will not *contaminate* himself by contact with it, but godlike surveys the world of objective facts from his *superior* position. He is outside the universe — but above it. And, of course, excessive modesty and conceit can be psychologically equivalent. Such reflections apply to many historical conceptions, and in particular, perhaps, to Kant's Transcendental Ego.

With personal and impersonal facts it is hardly otherwise — at any rate as these phrases are used by psychologists. A distinction perhaps can be drawn so as to make their usage almost satisfactory for the logician. The *prima facie* difficulty is that an impersonal fact, in the psychological usage, is clearly also personal, for it is a fact about a person. Now there is no theoretical objection to supposing that suitable definitions fulfilling this need could be framed; and then the psychological usage would be logically sound. Even then, the logician might regard the usage as misleading.

Yet a difficulty remains; for it would be possible still to

call the fact about the barrel-organist or the fact about dirt, when expressed directly and not in polite language or in language about money respectively, personal facts. If so, the word "personal" would be used in a new sense. In practice the question hardly arises, for the psychologist's business is to deal with personal facts (in the sense in question) and to enable his patient to render them impersonal (in the sense in question) so that, for example, the patient knows how to translate a statement about money into a statement about dirt. The psychologist is concerned for the most part with indirect expressions, their symptomatic functioning; and consequently the distinction between "personal" and "impersonal" is to him very useful.

Now it may be observed that personal and impersonal facts are not *different in kind* — and this leads to the third and last criticism of the rhetorical exposition of the distinction. This distinction either into subjective and objective facts or into personal and impersonal facts implies that two entirely different kinds of facts are being discussed, and this is not the case. It should be clear that one and the same fact can be personal *or* impersonal, and that the difference lies in the mode of expression, (I sometimes used the unexplained phrases "directly express" and "indirectly express", which tend to reveal where the emphasis really lies). Clearly then this whole terminolgy is grossly misleading from a logical point of view . In turning now to give a logical exposition, I will try to devise a terminology free from these misleading features, though I may some times insert "personal " or "impersonal" in brackets as an aid to memory.

Logical exposition of a distinction about facts.

A contrast may be drawn between two different kinds of ways in which sentences can be used to express facts. By this I mean (*a*) that one and the same fact can be expressed in two

characteristically different ways, and (*b*) that a given sentence may be used to express in two characteristically different ways two different facts. I will use the phrase "directly express", where it is customary to say "express", merely to effect a contrast with the other mode of expressing which I will define. It might be well to emphasise that the contrast has nothing whatever to do with that important problem of logical analysis that is concerned with the contrast between the way a sentence expresses a fact and the way it expresses the analysis of the fact. For example "A is brother of B" expresses the fact that A is brother of B and also expresses in (a different sense, of course) the fact that A is male and has a parent in common with B. This kind of distinction is not, however, relevant here; in the present usage "A is brother of B" will simply directly express the fact that A is brother of B.

The other way of expressing facts I will call "symptomatically expressing". Thus the use of "The barrel-organist is at the door" could symptomatically express a fact which could be *directly expressed* in strong Anglo-Saxon. The use of "I am jingling the money in my pocket" coulds ymptomatically express the fact that the speaker had an unconscious desire to play with dirt. We might set up a definition thus : "The use of S_1 symptomically expresses F_2" means the same as "S_1 directly expresses F_1, S_2 directly expresses F_2, neither F_1 nor F_2 is a conjunctive part of the other, nor are F_1 and F_2 in any sense logically equivalent, but the use of S_1 is psychologically equivalent to S_2." And the psychological relation would be of this kind, that elements of F_1 would function as symbols, in the psycho-analytic sense, of elements in F_2. Note that it is not true to say that the *sentence* S_1, which directly expresses F_1, symptomatically expresses F_2. What does *symptomatically* express F_2 is the *use* of the sentence S_1. (*a*) above should now be clear. And (*b*) means this, that a given sentence may

directly express a fact, and that the same sentence may be used to symptomatically-express* a fact. Thus the sentence "I am jingling money in my pocket" directly expresses the fact that the speaker is jingling money in his pocket, and its use may symptomatically express the fact that he has an unconscious desire to play with dirt.

To sum up the double function of sentences. One and the same sentence can, at one and the same time, with or without design, directly express one fact, and be used in such a way as to symptomatically-express another fact.

This function of sentences to symptomatically-express facts, has been overlooked, I think most unfortunately, by logical analysts ; it is an oversight to dismiss them in days when philosophers stress the dictum that philosophy has to do with the usage of words.

The bearing of this distinction on speculative philosophy.

It is necessary to preface this section by clearing away an unimportant impediment. "Speculative philosophy" can be used for the writings of speculative philosophers; but these writings contained many propositions of a commonsense nature, so that some only of the propositions of speculative philosophy were — in a second sense — speculative. Now in general it was only the speculative propositions that were important. Accordingly if "speculative philosophy" is sometimes used to cover solely a body of speculative propositions and sometimes to cover an entire set of writings containing some non-speculative propositions, no confusion should result, and the particular usage in any special case should be clear from the context.

What is being urged is that, though in a great part of ordinary

---

(*) It seems better to split the infinitive in these cases.

life all we require of sentences is that they should directly express facts, yet that in using them we symptomatically express facts about ourselves;* and the same process may occur with scientific statements. Now the sentences of speculative philosophy were designed to directly-express facts (were designed to express impersonal facts about the universe); and in accordance with my distinction their use also symptomatically expressed facts about their authors) — and to this there is no objection. But the present contention is that they succeeded in the latter function only.

A definition of "speculative philosophy" could be framed at this point, if a qualification is made, which will serve to bring out an essential feature of the definition : it consists in pointing out — what is very important — that the sentences of speculative philosophy are not *exactly* of the same kind as "The barrel-organist is at the door" in its symptomatic use. The difference lies in this, that the speaker of the latter may *know* he is not directly expressing a fact, though the words have all the appearance of doing so, whereas in the case of the former class of sentences the speaker is unaware, and cannot tell by introspection, that he is not directly expressing a fact.

Except for this difference, "I am jingling money in my pocket" illustrates very well the type of sentence composing speculative philosophy. In brief, then, speculative philosophy makes utterances (i) that have all the appearances of directly expressing facts, (ii) that do not really do so, (iii) whose deceptive appearance cannot be discovered by introspection, and (iv) whose sole function is to symptomatically-express facts about its author.

(*) It is a nice question with which of the two functions language arose.

This definition clearly excludes nonsense syllables and sentences constructed out of them (by psychologists) from the sphere of speculative philosophy.

It is impossible, unfortunately, to find a sentence, belonging to ordinary speech in the way that "The barrel-organist is at the door" does, that will be of exactly the same kind as the sentences found in speculative philosophy. The reason for this is fairly clear : if there were such a sentence, it would appear capable of directly expressing a fact but could not actually do so; and this is self-contradictory, for a sentence with this property could not belong to ordinary speech; hence a perfect illustration from ordinary language is logically impossible.

It may now be agreed that speculative philosophy can be shown in detail to consist in general of NonSense, if its sentences are supposed to directly-express facts (impersonal); hence what it expresses consists of symptomatically expressed facts (personal). It will probably not be disputed that the mental element in such a sentence involves the philosopher that makes the speculation, *i.e.* that speculative philosophy is always about its authors. In a sense, therefore, the history of philosophy consists of important autobiographies.

This change of standpoint has an important bearing on the logico-analytical approach to historical philosophy. In this wider view, where speculative sentences are no longer regarded as directly expressive of facts, historical philosophy ceases to be NonSense; *it assumes, on the contrary, considerable significance.*

With regard to the interpretation of "the clarification of thought", if this means that our business is merely to reveal the NonSense present in historical philosophy, then the clarification of thought is undertaking too easy a task and is omitting an important function. This is the difficult one of finding

out what mental facts speculative philosophy is symptomatically expressing. Philosophers may not relish tackling speculation now, because they realise more or less that something psychological is involved; but psychology can no longer be evaded by the philosopher.

The preliminary thesis of this book regarding speculative philosophy is, certainly, that it is NonSense — in the technical sense of "NonSense" in question — but further that this fact is relatively unimportant. Poetry of certain kinds is also NonSense; but that is of no consequence, for it is neither intended nor desirable that poetry of this kind should make sense — its function is a different one and a more important one than that of making sense.*

But, so much being granted, it is of some moment to show why this concession is unimportant : the reason should now be clear, that speculative philosophy *has* sense when it is approached from the right standpoint, *i.e.* when its function is seen to be concerned with symptomatically expressed facts and not with directly expressed facts. In this kind of way some poetry, too, though NonSense if we read it as directly expressive of facts, makes sense.

The whole point is that the standard for speculative philosophy is not logico-analytical but psycho-analytical : to judge speculative philosophy to be NonSense is to judge correctly (from a certain point of view) but trivially because it is to use the wrong criterion.

It is now time to reopen the question of the meaning of words. It is a commonplace that speculative philosophers were unduly lax in explaining how they used words. In any

---

(*) I do not wish to imply any further analogy between poetry and metaphysics.

scientific work or work of exactitude the regulations are simple: if you do not use a word in some customary sense, there is no ready way for the reader to discover how you are using it, so you must explain the sense which you are attaching to it. You are under no obligation to *define* it, but you must explain your usage in some way, such as by giving examples which may be easily understood. Now the speculative philosophers hardly ever used their important words in any customary sense, and never gave adequate explanations of the usage of these words.

From the logico-analytic standpoint the reason for this evasiveness is obvious : speculative philosophers did not explain the sense of their important words simply because they could not do so. To do so, for the logical analyst, would have revealed whatever NonSense they were writing. The suspicion grows, however, that the reason lies rather in the fact that to do so would have displayed an insight into the workings of their minds, which has become possible only with the advent of psycho-analysis. The speculative philosophers were writing their own biographies, but owing to the difficulty of psycho-analysing himself — one can set down a host of symbols (in the psycho-analytic sense of "symbol") or symptomatic expressions but cannot ascertain completely the facts they manifest—the writer of speculative philosophy cannot discover what facts about his unconscious he is symptomatically expressing.

It was thus beyond the bounds of possibility for the speculative philosopher to explain how he was using his important words. Such a fact would not, however, entitle the logical analyst to judge speculative philosophy to be incapable of treatment; for the fact remains that somehow or other many people have been able to *understand* speculative writings. What was understood must have been conveyed by the words used, so

that one is driven to the conclusion that these philosophers conveyed their meaning by literary devices or rhetoric.

As a means of communication rhetoric has certain advantages and drawbacks, as compared with precise explanation or with definitions. The principal advantage lies in its capacity for saving time and its chief drawback lies in the fact that listeners or readers will be unlikely to attach the same meaning as one another. These two features make rhetoric unsuitable for exact discourse, where time is no object but accuracy is; and they also suggest that rhetoric is admirably suited to expressing emotion, for emotion cannot wait, yet does not require nice shades of meaning to be accurately expressed.

Accordingly it is by no means absurd to suppose that speculative philosophy employed rhetoric in order to convey its meaning, and that this rhetoric expressed (reasonably well) certain emotions that its authors were desirous of satisfying. Viewed in this light, speculative philosophy is not only free from blame for not giving definitions but may be seen to have adequately fulfilled its own nature. Indeed so far from rhetoric's being beneath the logician's notice, its use is not entirely unknown in logico-analytical circles.

We are now in a position, perhaps, to attach a meaning to "understand" as used in "I understand nonsense". The understanding is the response evoked in the speaker on being stimulated by rhetoric (nonsense), when he has a certain feeling of identification with the authors of the rhetoric. Thus understanding consists in attuning one's frame of mind in a certain way, *i.e.* in controlling or grouping one's emotions so as to find the same outlet in the rhetoric as did the emotions of its author.

Perhaps this discussion yields a clue also to the unpopularity in the eyes of many philosophers of contemporary logico-ana-

lytical activities in the sphere of the meaning of words. For non-logico-analytical students of philosophy are at present almost bound to be speculative philosophers ; and, if they employ rhetoric, they may unconsciously feel that the deep significance of their thoughts is being pursued by the analytical philosophers in a manner far too embarrassing. That logical analysis could never succeed in this way does not affect the point, which is simply that a close inspection of the meaning of words is apt to be embarrassing to those who employ them rhetorically.

On the other hand, apart from its function in connexion with the meaning of words, logical analysis must remain unpopular; for it closes up an important emotional outlet to speculative philosophers. It shows their views are NonSense, but does nothing to allay the minds of those to whom NonSense is of deep significance. It is an unfortunate psychological fact that it does not satisfy the human mind to prize nonsense — the human mind has to *believe* in its nonsense, *i.e.* believe it makes sense and is *true*. If logical analysis throws an ineradicable doubt on speculative philosophy, it need not hope to be popular with those bereft of emotional outlet. If, however, speculative philosophers were psycho-analysed, their problems would be psychologically solved — or resolved or dissolved. Their problems — as concerned with directly expressed facts — would no longer be discussed, just as nowadays we do not discuss the truth or falsity of the Greek belief that the stars were holes in a covering through which light passed, or the truth or falsity of a child's belief in Father Christmas.

A somewhat curious consequence follows from the present view. It is that the use of *every* sentence can symptomatically express a true proposition. This apparently nonsensical result, however, can be easily seen to contain nothing but what is

obvious if we reflect. All that is asserted is that, in addition to the function that sentences have of directly expressing facts, the use of any sentence symptomatically expresses a mental fact. Thus a sentence may express what is false if it fails to directly-express a fact, and yet at the same time its use may express what is true about the person that utters it. This consequence is probably true even in the prosaic situation where a person states that his umbrella is in the hall, even when this is true. But the consequence is almost certainly true with metaphysics, and quite certainly true in what may appear to be a doubtful case, *i.e.* when a person tells a lie deliberately — is it not obvious that he is symptomatically making some very important true statement about himself ?

Speculative philosophers are charged not only with failing to provide definitions but even with failing to take due notice of ambiguity. Yet ambiguity gives expression to an important psychical mechanism. Thus to the logical analyst it is a mystery why the word "good" should be used both of a man's character and of his actions; he may even hold that there is nothing whatever in common between the two usages. But for the psycho-analyst it is not a question of two usages but of one meaning, because of a psychological identification between a man's character and his actions. Not all ambiguity, however, depends upon this sort of identification.

In support of this view of language let us consider once again Professor Moore's bewilderment, quoted at the head of Chapter III, about ambiguity — as if it were designed to mislead philosophers. Is there anything surprising in this behaviour of language ? It arose without a thought for logical analysts. Perhaps puzzlement at ambiguity is due to the following misapprehension : it is in some quarters supposed that language arose as a means of communicating needs. With

this we must agree to some extent; but the question is as to
the sort of needs. If the need was of the kind expressed by
"Pass the sugar" or "Ox; me hungry" (and this is probably
what most people have in mind) then it is natural to expect
the function of language to be the direct expressing of facts.
In that case ambiguity is to be decried, since it renders the
direct expressing of facts unnecessarily difficult. Indeed this
point would seem to be so important that had this been the
function of language, ambiguity would probably not have
arisen. I would tentatively suggest, on the contrary, that
language arose to communicate needs of a different order —
purely mental needs — that it arose in answer to an over-
whelming necessity to express emotion. That others should
understand was (and is) a point of much smaller importance.
Though of less importance, it was (and is) however of im-
portance in this way. It was (and is) necessary for man to com-
municate emotions to others only because it is one of the easiest
ways of communicating them to *himself*. It is well known to
psycho-analysts that an unconscious emotion cannot on account
of resistances be recognised directly by the person that has
it : it must become symbolised or rationalised in certain
ways before it is acceptable to his conscious mind — and it
has to be unrecognisable in the symbol or manifestation.
Only thus can the unconscious safely express itself, or indeed
express itself at all. In particular by means of the mechanisms
of projection and identification, a person sees his unconscious
emotions in other people, even though he does not recognise
them as his. In this way a person, identifying himself with
his hearer, can listen to his own emotional outpourings. The
reason he could not do so directly is simply because his resis-
tances would be too great. The process has to be veiled by
having the guise of directly expressing facts which require
to be communicated. The attention is thus diverted from

the emotions, and the unconscious is freer to express itself. This would throw some light on the original twofold function of language, and it would show also that the primary need was to express emotion, not to communicate objective fact. Hence ambiguity is not the drawback it would otherwise have been. But, though not a disadvantage, we must find a positive advantage in ambiguity if we are to explain its existence.

An example where ambiguity is held to be used to extremes comes from Hegel. For some logical analysts his philosophy is a vast edifice built upon a foundation riddled with ambiguity; he has even been accused of founding his philosophy upon puns. Although this, if true, would convict his system of being NonSense, it would still be possible to understand the system; which means that there was something capable of being understood through ambiguity. But, even if the charge against Hegel is not true, something more moderate holds. His dialectic progressed by opposites; the thing manifested itself successively in opposite ways; and sometimes the same category embraced opposite manifestations. Parallel to this, we find the same neurosis manifesting itself in opposite ways. Thus, what is often called the inferiority complex makes for extreme diffidence in some and in others makes for a blustering over-confidence. And in the sphere of language the ancient Egyptian word *ken* could be used to mean either strong or weak. It would appear, therefore, that Hegel was exhibiting a most important psycho-analytical fact in his elaborate logic of opposites. In particular, since the same thing could manifest itself in two opposite ways by means of the same word, different usages of a word, even when opposites, may stand psychologically for the same thing.

No doubt the expression of opposites in one way is an extreme case; but one expression for different though closely allied things is common. The advantage in general would

seem to be the possibility of conveying psychological identity.

This discussion of ambiguity and the meaning of words may be ended with what appears to be a beautiful example of the twofold function of language. This concerns that well worn topic — the "laws" of nature. Professor Moore has worked out all the relevant material with his usual unequalled clearness. [1] Since a law is what has been willed by a person or set of persons having the necessary authority or can be deduced from something that has been so willed, it follows that it is NonSense to talk of *laws* of nature. For there is no person or set of persons who could have willed the *laws* of nature. Further we could not talk of "repealing" the laws of nature.

If we ask why people have talked in this way, we shall see that psychologically people *do* regard laws of nature as laws in the legal sense defined above. But this is *not* to assert that "L is a law of nature" means the same as "L has been willed and could be repealed (etc.) by a being having the necessary authority over nature"; and I must show my view does not entail this assertion and so convict itself. But let us be clear about what is involved. First these two statements do not mean the same as each other, for the first may be and frequently is true whereas the latter is plainly false, and hence a view which entailed that these statements were equivalent would be also false. Very likely philosophers up to the present would infer from the fact (which I admit to be a fact) that the statements are not equivalent that my view is wrong, *i.e.* would infer that people do not regard laws of nature as laws in the legal sense. To this attitude may be pointed out (*a*) a flaw in the arguments due to neglect of the way in which facts can be symptomatically expressed and (*b*) positive grounds for

---

(1)   G. E. Moore, *Ethics*, London, 1912, pp. 147-9.

holding that people do think of laws of nature in this light.

"L is a law of nature" directly expresses whatever logicians may decree it expresses, and then ordinary people, when initiated, will agree. But whether initiated or not, they will *probably* (and *certainly*, if they are not initiated) use "L is a law of nature" to symptomatically-express the following fact : that they regard nature anthropomorphically as a creature subject to law (legal sense), that its laws are willed, can be altered, and repealed by a being having the necessary authority and conveniently referred to as "the Creator".

This analysis has two points in its favour : it allows that people do regard laws of nature as laws in the legal sense ; and it does not convict them of making a logical mistake in so doing.

An observation on logical analysis may here be made. When the logical analyst effects an analysis, *i.e.* translates one sentence in a certain way by another, he is faced with the difficulty of knowing if the analysis is correct, *i.e.* if the two sentences really have the same meaning. Frequently his only way of deciding is by introspection. Introspection yields evidence for thinking that the translation conforms to the way in which words are customarily used, and this method would be satisfactory if introspection gave decided answers; but often it leaves us in a state of uncertainty — here are two sentences, we say, we know what they mean, and yet we cannot say if they mean the same as each other. Now the present distinction between directly expressing and symptomatically expressing explains why this is so; for the two may have the same meaning because they both directly express the same fact; yet when we ask if the translation conforms to the common usage of the words, introspection will confuse us, not through the meaning of the sentence *i.e.* of the facts directly expressed by them, but through *use* of the sentences *i.e.* of the facts symptomati-

cally expressed by them. Introspection therefore gives irrelevant information to the logical analyst.

(*b*) That the phrases "Maker", "Creator", "Author of the Universe", and so on exist shows that people have believed in the possibility of laws being willed for nature. Moreover there has existed the belief that the Creator could suspend laws of nature, rendering them subservient to "higher" laws. This power seems analogous to that of suspending *Habeas Corpus* in times of emergency.

Summary of Position Reached.

The general issue between metaphysics and epiphilosophy may be put thus :—

All that the epiphilosopher (logical analyst, logical positivist) is entitled to say is that metaphysical statements cannot be brought into relation with any sense-experience, *i.e.* are NonSense. To this the speculative thinker's reply is one of agreement, for he never meant them to be relatable to sense-experience, *i.e.* he meant them to be TransSense.

The speculative philosopher would maintain, however, that his statements, though not relatable to sense-experience, were relatable to experience in a wider sense (TransSense).

The epiphilosopher may then deny that this Experience affords evidence of anything objective, *i.e.* deny that it is an experience *of* anything. But the speculative philosopher would refuse to accept this.

The epiphilosopher would have no grounds for his denial; he can give only an arbitrary definition of what avenues of experience lead to the objective or "recommend" that the word "experience" shall mean no more than "sense-experience". On the other hand the speculative logician cannot prove his contention either.

This is a complete impasse, which philosophy cannot over-

come. The following way out of the stalemate is offered. The speculative position cannot be disproved; all that can be said is that one should no more attempt to disprove it than attempt to disprove the existence of fairies where children are concerned. Children have experiences that are described in terms of fairies; a good fairy will fulfil all a child's hopes — to-morrow; speculative philosophers have experiences that are described in terms of a harmonious Absolute in which all conflict is overcome. With the power both of the fairy and the Absolute, "it must be, therefore it is".

The statements of a speculative philosopher do not directly express facts about the universe but symptomatically express facts about himself—they form his unconscious autobiography.

CHAPTER XII

Psychocentrics.

"Every question in philosophy is the mask of another question; and all these masking and masked questions require to be removed and laid aside, until the ultimate but *truly first* question has been reached...Indeed it may be affirmed with certainty that no man, for at least two thousand years, has teen the true flesh-and-blood countenance of a single philosophical problem" — Ferrier.

"*Hypotheses non fingo.*" — Newton.

A speculative system, in which statements symptomatically express facts about its author — which is an autobiography, in which the author depicts in philosophical terms a world entirely his own, a world that responds to the rhythm of his own emotional structure, may be described as a form of Psychological Solipsism. It is easy to find examples of such a kind. Thus "Considered as the apotheosis of an abstraction, Solipsism [some ordinary logical or philosophical sense of the word] is quite false. But from its errors we may collect aspects of truth, to which we sometimes are blind. And, in the first place, though my experience is not the whole world, yet that world appears in my experience, and so far as it exists there, it *is* my state of mind. That the real Absolute, or God himself, is also my state, is a truth often forgotten. . . But beside these two truths there is yet another truth worth noticing. My self is certainly not the Absolute, but, without it, the Absolute would not be itself. You cannot anywhere abstract wholly from my personal feelings; you cannot say that apart even from the meanest of these, anything else in the universe would be what it

is. And in asserting this relation, this essential connection, of all reality with myself, Solipsism has emphasised what should not be forgotten."[1]

Here, Bradley is saying firstly that the universe is a part of his whole, his world, when he says that "though my experience is not the whole world, yet that world appears in my experience"; only for a psychological solipsist could the entire universe be a part of his world. Secondly, his picture of that side of the universe that he does not, in any ordinary sense, experience is a glowing aggrandisement of his world which he does experience, and is thus a part of his world. Thirdly, the whole or the Absolute would not be itself if Bradley himself were left out; for the whole is the functioning of all its parts, and there would be something awry with the functioning if a part were omitted. Here, moreover, is exemplified the present use of the word "Solipsism"; for, not only does Bradley use it in this way, but the Absolute is his world in a *psychological* sense. Psychological Solipsism does not exclude the existence of other people, but their significance for the solipsist lies in the part they play in *his* world. Beyond that he has no further interest in them.

These features are well brought out by a passage from Bosanquet,[2] which though it has already been quoted deserves none the less to be quoted again : "Just to bring our suggestions together by a very imperfect simile, we might compare the Absolute to, say, Dante's mind as uttered in the *Divine Comedy*. The point would be that in it external nature, say, Italy, becomes an emotion and a value, not less but more than spatial; each self, say Paolo or Francesca, while still

(1) F. H. Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, London, 1925, pp. 259-60.
(2) Bernard Bosanquet, *Principle of Individuality and Value*, London, 1912, p. xxxvii.

its real self, is also a factor in the poet's mind, which is uttered in all these selves taken together; and the whole poetic experience is single, and yet includes a world of space and persons, which to any common mind fall apart and become 'a geographical expression' plus certain commonplace historical figures. This inclusion we compare to the Absolute, as it holds together what for us is finite experience."

It is surely striking that philosophers have talked almost always of the *world* — seldom of the universe. In our personal use of language, "universe" has little place — it just stands for that enormous conglomeration of uninteresting *un*personal things ; but "world" is very different. It stands for ambitions, fears, and the things, or rather people, round whom one's life centres. In its philosophical form it has been expressed in a single sentence — "I am my world". [1]

The preceding discussion, including the argument of the last chapter, serves but to indicate — not to demonstrate — the conception of Psychological Solipsism, that speculative philosophy consists of unconsious autobiography. Can this be regarded as true of all metaphysics without restriction ? Is it certain even of some speculations ? These questions can be answered only in the light of empirical evidence : that is to say, it would be necessary to ascertain in some detail exactly what was being symptomatically expressed by a given metaphysic. This I have attempted to do with Schopenhauer's system, [2] and the result may be summarily described thus :-

(1) Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico - Philosophicus*, London, 1922, 5.63.

(2) J. O. Wisdom, "The Unconscious Origin of Schopenhauer's Philosophy", *The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, Vol. XXVI, Parts 1 & 2, London, 1945.

His main principle of the will symbolised the most primitive urge for insatiable pleasure; in conflict with this was the denial of the will to live, which stood for a threat of mutilation; a symbolic resolution of the conflict was found in the philosophy of the archetype (*Idee*). Such an application of psycho-analysis will, I hope, demonstrate in concrete detail how metaphysical assertions are symptomatic of a philosopher's inmost psychical life, of whose nature and existence he is unaware. That a conclusion of the same general kind would be drawn from the psycho-analysis of other speculations constitutes the Psychocentric Hypothesis. It opens up a new field of work to be done on the bulk of historical philosophy, the results of which would test the hypothesis; though even the one case of Schopenhauer, I venture to think, endows the hypothesis with a notable probability. As verification proceeded, the task would be to transform speculative thought from being a pseudo-science about the universe in general into a psychological history giving the key to the minds of speculative philosophers. This is not a philosophical procedure but one of applied science. It may be aptly called "Psychocentrics".

The choice of the word "Psychocentrics" calls for some remarks. There is some objection to Freud's word "Metapsychology", for the science in question is not "higher than" or "next to" psychology; rather is it an *application* of psychology to material of a certain kind. Besides Metapsychology remains the examination of the basic concepts of psychoanalysis . It should be observed that references will not be made to *psychocentric philosophy*, because what is being presented is not a *kind* of philosophy : I will talk of "Philosophical Psychocentrics" — usually omitting the adjective for brevity — for there can be Mathematical Psychocentrics, Musical Psychocentrics, and so on. That is, we are doing Mathematical Psychocentrics if we trace the mathematician's play with

figures to unconscious sources or if we translate his mathematical assertions into statements about himself. This book is concerned only with Philosophical Psychocentrics.

Now the word has a most interesting derivation — a point of no interest perhaps to the logical analyst, but extremely illuminating to the psycho-analyst. "Psycho-" requires no comment. But "centre" comes from κέντρον and has two striking meanings. The first is the obvious one of centre; and indeed this would have satisfied my requirements in the word. But by a stroke of good fortune, which one could scarcely have hoped for, far less sought, the other meaning of it turns out to be "a goad". Liddell and Scott in their *Greek-English Lexicon* give the following meanings for κέντρον : (1) a horse goad, spur, incentive (metaphorical), (2) an instrument of torture, (3) a point (of a spear), (4) a peg (of a top), (5) of animals : the sting (of bees and wasps), the spur (of a cock), and the quill (of a porcupine), (6) the stationary point of a pair of compasses, and (7) a pin or rivet. All but the last two of these clearly mean the same kind of thing, namely a goad or driving on or away of something. The other two imply a fixed point, which in the case of the compasses is the centre of a circle. One may surmise a connexion between the meanings, if the goad became associated with the sharp stationary point of a pair of compasses, then with the pinprick made by this point, after which κέντρον would mean both a goad and the centre of a circle, both meanings being wrapped in one; for with both these properties associated, the centre would be a goad driving out radii to the circumference. Indeed this meaning still survives in the idea of universities as *centres* of learning, places from which learning goads its way out. I do not wish to suggest, however, that the word had both these separate meanings at once; for instead it is likely that the word did not come to mean "centre" till long after it was customarily used

to mean "goad". It is, indeed, sufficient for my purpose and strongly suggested by psychological considerations that one meaning grew out of the other. It would be interesting to investigate the use of the word in the transition period between the time when it was, as we believe, used for a goad and the time when it was used for a centre.

Be these things as they may, the goad is the unconscious source of mental activity; and it is in terms of this that I wish to analyse speculative philosophy, and to see how unconscious drives manifest themselves as speculative philosophy. Thus "Psychocentrics" covers both sides of the subject : one consists in showing *that* speculation is really psychical and referred to the author as a centre; the other shows *how* this is so by empirical investigation, effecting the translation of impersonal speculative language into personal autobiographical language, and by showing how the unconscious goad determines speculation to take now this form, now that.

Psychocentrics is then merely one particular branch of psychology. Though it cannot on this account claim to be revered in the way that philosophy frequently has been revered in the past, yet it should earn our respect as a branch of psychology dealing scientifically with conceptions that mankind has always held in high regard. In one sense Psychocentrics sounds the death-knell of speculation. In another sense it transforms speculation into a subject that will no longer suffer the reproaches so commonly heaped upon philosophy. Thus Psychocentrics is not open to the charge sometimes levelled against sceptical metaphysics, that a metaphysic to end metaphysic is itself a metaphysic; for Psychocentrics does not end metaphysic but transforms it. Moreover Psychocen-

(*) I am indebted to Professor Price for drawing my attention to this fact.

trics is *not* a metaphysic; and hence it is the one possible science that in a sense ends metaphysic without itself being a metaphysic. When Kant ended metaphysic, he at the same time recognised that there would always be metaphysics, for it was an activity the human mind could not completely avoid. Psychocentrics takes account of this human trait; is prepared to give an account of any metaphysic that should arise; and would remain an interpretation of strange conceptions of the past, should all the potential philosophers of the future be psycho-analysed in infancy.

So much for the end of speculation; but what of its beginning ? Philosophy did not begin with wonder at externality, as Aristotle supposed. Science, which is not speculative in this sense, probably did. Speculative philosophy was an anwser to a craving.* In its ethical origin with the Greeks it expressed a desire for knowledge of the happy way of life. Philosophers naturally found this in philosophy, so that there is nothing remarkable in Aristotle's prescription of *theoria*. Some philosophers believed that happiness was best achieved by repression; others in license. Writers, less obviously ethical, have really been exercised on the same problem in an intellectualised form : thus no one can miss the note of serenity that pervades the writings of Bradley and Bosanquet. In most cases the flight to the intellectual life was due either to unhappy emotional experiences or to fear of them which is itself an unhappy emotional experience. Speculative philosophy represents flight from reality, the hard reality of unpleasant experiences.

If such be the function of speculative philosophy, and if it can fulfil its task with moderate success, it may appear un-

(*) Professor Price points out to me that this is much more obvious in the case of Indian speculative philosophy. I would add that it is equally obvious with current Existentialism in France.

fortunate that its outer plausibility — for it has to be *believed* to be efficacious—should have been forcefully attacked by logical analysis and its real function revealed by psycho-analysis. But if psycho-analysis shows that speculative philosophy was intended to give psychological relief and that it can no longer do so, psycho-analysis at the same time takes over that original function of speculative philosophy in that it resolves the emotional tension.

Thus no longer is psychology a part of philosophy. Rather is the scientific study of philosophy a part of psychology. This is the change of standpoint by which the metamorphosis of speculative philosophy gives place to Philosophical Psychocentrics. So far, then, from being exploded, speculation takes on a new lease of life. Were we to stop short after considering the effects of logical analysis upon it, we should indeed be guilty of bringing about total disintegration. But in going beyond logical analysis, we are seeing speculation for what it really is — a magnificent attempt to harness unbridled emotion. It is universal in that it reflects what is common to almost all of us. However misleading it may be and however it may have disappointed is in our search for truth, speculation stands as a monument to the great drives that animate mankind.

On the logical side of this transformation of speculative thought into Philosophical Psychocentrics it is necessary to clarify certain features.

(i) A difficulty might be raised concerning a vicious infinite regress : for, if speculation is held to symtomatically-express autobiography only and not to directly-express truth about the universe, may this not also apply to Psychocentrics?

The answer to this is clear, that the objection consists in assuming that facts can be symptomatically expressed only.

And on this assumption the objection would itself carry no weight since it would only symptomatically express a fact — and so would this reply to that objection. But there are no grounds whatever for this assumption. In the present thesis, no reason has been given why a sentence cannot have the two functions at once, of directly expressing a fact, and of being used to symptomatically express another fact. The sole claim is that *as a matter of fact* certain sentences, namely those of speculation, have but one of these two functions. Again the objection might be put in another form : that it supposes the statement about the symptomatically expressive nature of speculation to be a statement about itself — a fallacy well known in modern logic. But, so far from this being so, the statement in question is one about a directly expressed fact.

In short, Psychocentrics would like every other study be symptomatically expressive; but it would also be directly expressive because founded upon an empirical basis.

(ii) The psychocentric hypothesis might appear to be incompatible with the fact of progress in philosophy. What kind of progress has there been ? It has been maintained throughout that there has been no progress towards truth. But it might be pointed out that the work of Kant, for instance, manifests more progress than that of, say Descartes. This may be admitted. Kant's work is more complex, profound, and of wider application. But the progress involved is of the kind found in the development from dream content and imagery to secondary elaboration, or of the kind found in the development of a myth from prehistorical times to the time of the ancient Greeks. Such progress takes place without implying objectivity, *i.e.* the truth of what is directly expressed. It is even possible to add that a later form may be more profound that an earlier one; for this means only that what is symptomatically expressed concerns a more fundamental part of the structure

of the author's mind in the one form than in the other.

(iii) It remains true that philosophical questions are "natural". It is natural to wonder about the origin of the universe; but this question must be divided into (*a*) its psychological meaning, concerning human origin, and (*b*) the scientific question to which there is as yet no answer.

(iv) It might appear that a psychological explanation of metaphysics, in explaining everything, explains nothing; or else that the psychological explanation is at most a necessary part of the root of philosophy but not the whole of it. There is no real difficulty here. The nature of the unconscious explanation varies from case to case, although the general factors involved may often be the same. Differences among philosophies would be due solely to the various proportions in which the several unconscious forces were combined, and no other factor need be postulated.

(v) Some would admit that there must be some psychological cause of a system of philosophy, but deny that such a cause could provide the meaning of the system; it would appear to them to be a confusion to identify cause and meaning. But, once the notion is made explicit, it contains no difficulty. Once again, we are not considering the kind of cause that consists of a blow on the head; we are considering the strictly psychologically kind that consists of a wish or fear or conflict. The fundamental causal factor is the *wish*, and a wish is a meaning.

(vi) If the statements of metaphysics are NonSense, how can we speak of deducing one statement from another — a phenomenon that undoubtedly occurs in metaphysics ?

An answer might be framed on the lines of the common distinction between the form of reasoning and its matter : thus the form of certain syllogisms is valid even though the premisses answer to nothing in the universe and, more than

that, are NonSense. Such an answer may be true so far as it goes, but it fails to deal with the kernel of the problem : to provide an account of deducibility. Let us consider this concept more closely.

The statement that $a^2 + 2ab + b^2 = (a + b)^2$ does not follow from $2 + 3 = 5$; it is in fact true only in relation to the axioms of algebra. But from $2 + 3 = 5$ follows the statement that $2 + 3 + 4 = 5 + 4$. Again $(2 + 3) 4 = 20$ does not follow from $5 \times 4 = 20$, unless we base the deduction on the statement that $2 + 3 = 5$. None the less logical consequences follow once the rules for the use of symbols are laid down, even if some statements that follow from these rules are NonSense. Now it is doubtful if this way of describing deducibility will do for speculative statements, because they are not constructed according to rules assigned for the usage of symbols in the way that mathematical statements are.

It is probable that, when a form of reasoning is considered valid, it is thought of as representing some shadowy entities. Accordingly speculative statements, so far from being constructed to follow the rules of their own language, would contain nouns that would be thought of as standing for some shadowy entities. If speculative concepts were thus supposed to represent some mythical or unconscious entities, the form of reasoning could be preserved and it would be correct to talk of deducing one speculative statement from another. They would at the same time be NonSense, in not expressing any possible sense-experience. To revert to a distinction often used in this book, speculative statements would be NonSense because of failing to directly-express something in the universe, but they would symptomatically-express subjects that would conform to the framework of formal reasoning.

Let us now consider deducibility, not from the conception we have of it in logic or mathematics, but from its use in the

primitive inference : "Lightning has struck my kraal; therefore I am bewitched." This is strictly NonSense, but it is perfectly sound reasoning, if we introduce the suppressed premiss : "Lightning bewitches the owner of what it strikes." It would be well to point out in what sense this is at the same time an *immediate* inference. It is an immediate inference in the psychological sense that no intellectual deliberation comes into play in making it, *i.e.* the primitive does not entertain the major premiss consciously in mind. But this does not prevent the reasoning from being syllogistic — as the primitive might himself see if he were introduced to logic. To us it is absurd and illogical to attribute disasters—such as would follow from bewitching — to lightning; but it is not illogical, for weird premisses are simply omitted and taken for granted. It would seem therefore that primitive deducibility such as this, so far from being different from the mathematical and logical conception, is exactly the same as this.

We may pass now to the phrases we sometimes hear : "primitive logic", meaning logic of a crude kind which would on refinement produce a different set of conclusions from those previously drawn, and "Nazi logic", meaning much the same thing. On examining instances of these kinds, we sometimes find that, *from the viewpoint of the primitive or Nazi* the inferences are valid (however much we may agree or disagree with the viewpoint). If so, then the "logic" of the primitive or of the Nazi is not different from ordinary logic; what then have people in mind in appearing to classify a new form of logic ? What is meant is probably that the inferences are thought to be illogical or invalid, because they lack the explicit statement of certain premises with which the logician that is neither a primitive nor a Nazi is acquainted. But logic that contains suppressed premisses must not be supposed to be basically illogical, for in that case Pythagoras' famous

theorem in geometry, for example, would likewise be illogical in that it is not deduced with complete rigour from the theorems that precede it, some of the premisses being omitted. The sum of the matter is probably this : that we call a process of reasoning logical in proportion as we are able to supply its suppressed premisses.

In what sense now may we talk of the unconscious as having a logic of its own ? Not in the sense that it reasons illogically as we may suppose a primitive or a Nazi to do, but in the sense that its important premisses, being unconscious, are suppressed and unfamiliar. The justification for attributing to it a logic of its own, a way of phrasing the matter that may mislead a logician into thinking of a different species of logic, is that so long as its premisses are unfamiliar its workings seem utterly irrational and illogical.

If we may conclude that the primitive, the Nazi, and the unconscious, all have logics of their own, all of which when gaps are filled conform to the canons of deducibility of strict logic and are thus logic of the same, one and only, kind, then, on the grounds of the symptomatic reference of speculative or NonSense statements to their unconscious psychocentric sources, we may conclude that NonSense statements can be logically deduced from one another.

The identity between deducibility in this context and in mathematics or logic may be seen more clearly from the following consideration. Even in logic and mathematics there is no absolute standard of rigorous deduction; for what is regarded as proof in one age is held to be insufficiently rigorous in another, so that from the viewpoint of the later time earlier arguments are either invalid or contain unrecognised assumptions. Euclid provides a homely example, which does not satisfy the instincts of contemporary mathematicians. We may therefore say that deduction is a process that psy-

chologically satisfies the desire for logical connectedness; thus logical proof amounts simply to a way of presenting a point to those whose liking for abstract notions and intellectual operations is highly developed.

There should be no difficulty, therefore, in seeing that on the psychocentric hypothesis metaphysics can be logical. After all, rationalisations are logical, and even the delusions of a paranoiac can be. It is, of course, strange that an unconscious urge should express itself in the form of premisses and conclusion, but this kind of effect is no different from the orderly manifestations to be found in dreams, rationalisations, and systematic delusions.

(vii) According to their standards, some would regard the logico-analytical treatment of speculation as *disproving* it; while others might hold that the combination of logical analysis and psychocentrics would form a strong case which must reasonably be accepted. Neither of these opinions is maintained in this book.

Our most important question, therefore, is to ask whether Psychocentrics may be supposed to "refute" metaphysics. It does not *disprove*, in a logical sense, the objectivity of speculative statements; it does not *prove* that speculation fails to directly-express transcendent facts. Moreover, if this result were deduced, Psychocentrics would stand self-convicted of going beyond its powers; for, if the mere transformation of a subject psychologically destroyed all its objective validity then the same disproof would hold with regard to scientific and other assertions, and, if the transformation to Philosophical Psychocentrics brought about a result of this kind, so would a transformation to Psychocentrics in general. Hence to disprove the reference to directly expressed fact, something over and above the psychological reorientation is required, some independent evidence. But, because empirical evidence can-

not bear on speculation and transcendent evidence could not be admitted until the result were established, no independent criterion is obtainable . Can the new standpoint, however, lend a certain probability or improbability to the truth of what it transforms ? Many, according to their standards of deduction, might think so. But the same reasons that render logical and empirical criteria irrelevant to proof also render them irrelevant to probability.

Others would view the whole matter in a different light. They would accept the psychology that speculation could be traced to unconscious emotions, and might even agree that the empirical verification obtained by subjecting the work of philosophers to psycho-analytical interpretation could be taken as read, but would argue that the same could be carried out for every science and that therefore no hypothesis about emotional sources can bear upon the truth or falsity or meaning of the study examined — in other words, that Psycho-centrics may unravel the causes of a given speculation but cannot provide us with any further knowledge about it. Now it would seem that such an attitude would be based upon a behaviourist or some form of correlation psychology, and the attitude would be very just if a speculation were merely traced physiologically, say, to a fall on the head suffered by its author in infancy. But *psycho-analysis* traces phenomena, not physiological by or physically to an event, but psychologically to feelings about that event, and thus *gives the meaning of the phenomena analysed.*

Let it be agreed that speculation, either on account of its own claims or as a result of applying logical analysis to it, does not directly-express objective facts about the universe, and let it be agreed that its meaning can be discovered by means of psycho-analysis; then, that its meaning over and above this contains no reference to transcendent facts becomes

something not to be proved but to be *seen*. This need not imply taking refuge in some vague intuitionism, for in the last resort truths, even logical and mathematical, must contain an element that is not proved but simply seen, to wit, the passage from one step in a deduction from another, which as was mentioned above may be "seen" in one age though not in another. Opinions grow, change, or die out. Who ever has disproved witchcraft ? Does a youth when passed a certain age demand a proof that fairies or Father Christmas do not exist ? To demand proof would be a sign that some part of him still lived in the past in the realm of phantasy. Perhaps it is not otherwise with those who still insist that further disproof of speculation is required; even though they may not have much conscious sympathy with speculation, this insistence would indicate that a side of their minds was with it, enmeshed in some phantasy that had no counterpart in reality. It is a matter of what Freud calls the Reality - Principle. This approach to the matter is, I believe, the proper one.

It may also be properly approached from the scientific, *i.e.* anthropological, angle. Let us detach ourselves and view the process of man's development : he was concerned to satisfy his biological impulses; as he developed he had recourse to magic, religion, art, science, philosophy, and so on, always as a means of dealing with reality or with his own impulses, and, when he philosophised, his mental processes, as the psycho-analyst can observe, involved the power of *rationalisation, i.e.* of finding a basis in reality for a conscious belief whose real source was in his own unconscious, and of *projection, i.e.* of finding in the outer world situations that symbolised without his knowing it the working of his own mind. Thus the facts of our observation are that man rationalises and projects without being aware that he is doing so. From this angle *intellection is a precipitate, deposited by the richness of man's nature, the final*

outcome of his whole being, the florescence of organic life. Now when we are called upon to give an account of philosophy, we are to deal with a single product of his reaction to his world, a fact we must not forget : hence our task is to give a scientific description, followed by a scientific hypothesis, that will embrace the whole behaviour of man, specially noting not only his need to speculate, *i.e.* to rationalise and project, but also the condition that for psychical reasons *he must not know of these;* and if our description or hypothesis succeed in covering this last requirement, the scientific picture is complete.

This does not provide disproof in the sense under considera-tion, logical or mathematical disproof and factual disproof, but it does constitute scientific disproof, which outside these is the only kind of disproof there is. Whether we choose to say that speculation is confuted or not depends upon whether we have in mind scientific disproof on the one hand, or on the other the mathematical kind for which the circle cannot be squared or the factual kind in which an accused establishes an alibi. But it must be borne in mind, of course, that both these ap-proaches presuppose the Principle of Empiricism and thus provide no "absolute" disproof. But does this mean any more than that it is as useless to argue a speculative philosopher out of his position by means of logical analysis or by the results of applying psycho-analysis to samples of speculation as it is for a psycho-analyst to try to cure a patient by means of reas-surances ?

CHAPTER XVIII

Philosophy as an Avenue to History.

" . . . and he returned to the Plato before him, hearing in it now, not the speech of one man only, but the argument of mankind."
Charles Morgan.

In this book so far a philosophy has been treated as symptomatic of some single individual's unconscious; now we must enquire if it has any social or historical significance.

In probing the work of some past philosopher, we must remember that he, *even* as a philosopher, was a sociological being. It is easy to suppose that as a man he had a place in some culture-circle or unit in the community while *qua* philosopher he was independent of such ties. We must, however, relinquish such speculative visws as that he was, *qua* philosopher, emotionless, without social relations, and timeless -- is not an absolute philosopher just as much a phantasy of ours as an absolute philosophy ? Let us remember that, philosopher though he was, his reflections were a product of his social environment.

A philosopher is to some extent dealing with his problems from the point of view of the time in which he lives : that is to say, on any question he deals with he unwittingly brings to bear on it certain unexamined attitudes of mind that, nurtured by his social environment, necessarily reflect the nature of his time. The influence of atmosphere on a philosopher becomes therefore of supreme importance, if we would understand him aright as a man; and conversely an adequate understanding of him may lead to a deeper knowledge of the

age in which he lives : more important than the philosophy
a man writes is the philosophy he fails to write.

Thus there are certain assumptions reflective of the atmos-
phere of his time that underlie a philosopher's work, and in
his own time these do not become explicit. It is true that he
has little need to mention them because his contemporaries,
being in touch with the same atmosphere, require them no
more than he. But the reason why he never states them is
more likely to be that they are semi-conscious, so woven into
his disposition that he finds it difficult to become aware of
them. Difficulty arises when we of a later age try to under-
stand such a philosopher. With our fingers no longer on the
pulse of his epoch, his tacit assumptions are not clear to us
— yet without them his thought is likely to remain an enigma;
and this contention holds *mutatis mutandis* for a contemporary
philosophy of a country that differs very markedly in its cul-
ture-values from our own. For these reasons an understanding
of a philosopher is to be gained by a study of his unwritten
assumptions; and it is on these that our minds must be focus-
sed when we study the written word.

In classing these assumptions as semi-conscious, they are
not nevertheless to be thought of as the same kind as those
personal unconscious feelings of which philosophy is sym-
ptomatic, for they are not personal in character any more
than the outward form of the philosophy to which they relate.
Nor are they to be identified with whatever propositions a
philosophy might need if it is made logically consistent, though
they may possibly include these. The omission of consistency-
postulates, as they may be called, may either be symptomatic
of a blind-spot in the author's mind, or it may relate to the
unvoiced assumptions of the period, or it may be an indica-
tion of both these; in the latter case the consistency-postulate
omitted would provide us with an example of the kind of un-

written assumption that is under discussion. But these unwritten assumptions are not intended to be restricted to consistency-postulates; they are intended to be wider in scope. They are meant to cover assumptions that lie at the back of a philosophy and that pervade all its more important conceptions. The set of unwritten assumptions at any given time may be called the *Background-Presupposition* of the time. The relations between the unconscious sources of a philosophy and its background condition is simply that the former come to the surface under the influence of the latter as a factor that conditions the final form of the philosophy.

Let us seek some examples. It is clear that Berkeley, for instance, grew up with hypochondriacal tendencies in an age when licentiousness and purity were both very much in evidence, and it is certain that had he lived in some other age, he would have grown up with the hypochondriacal tendencies though the form that these took would have been different. We may be sure he would have been a man of exceptional uprightness and humility, a purist in style, an enthusiastic and original thinker who would, strangely enough, use his great power of thinking things out for himself to argue for the *status quo* in scientific matters and oppose new discoveries — he was that interesting phenomenon, an original and unconventional conservative. But no matter how these features of the man remained, there is no reason to suppose that he would necessarily have produced a philosophy of immaterialism, such as he gave us in the *Principles*. It is, on the contrary, highly likely that this work was moulded by something peculiar to Berkeley's time. One point at any rate seems clear : that the conception of Deism dominated those days in a thorough-going way, and entered deeply into the thought not only of those that were deeply religious but even of those that would nowadays be called atheists. Now this chapter is a very ten-

tative one and the suggestions contained in it must not be pressed too far. Thus it is not claimed that Deism provides a complete account of the environment in which Berkeley found himself; but it certainly gives an example of what is here meant by the background-presupposition that moulds what springs from a man's unconscious creative activities or that directs these into the channels along which they are to flow. As to the semi-conscious nature of the deistic presupposition, Berkeley would, of course, have been well aware of Deism and the controversies involving it; but he would probably not have been aware that it dominated his time (if I am correct in suggesting that it did) in the sense that he would not have been able to imagine what it would be like to live in an age dominated by something else.

Descartes's philosophy may be taken as another example. His sharp distinction between matter and mind was the scholastic heritage of his age, when the soul had to be regarded as numerically different from the body. Plato's theory of Ideas apparently owed itself to a strong oligarchical background : for the world of Ideas was reality, and only philosophers or oligarchical rulers were able to establish contact to any degree with that world. This last example is due to Professor Farrington's recent work, [1] in which he adduces a great deal of evidence to show that the philosophy of the ancient world was both dominated by the political outlook of the time* and even written in some cases in order to maintain it unchanged by opposing influence. This is the only work, so far as I know, that is at all closely connected with the theme of the present chapter; the reader may therefore be referred to it for further examples of the close and important relation that subsists between philosophy and the community.

(1) Benjamin Farrington, *Science and Politics in the Ancient World*, London, 1939, Chapter VIII, and *passim.* *Cf.* modern Exissentialism.

It is worth considering an interesting, though at first sight superficial, ambiguity between the popular and academic senses of "philosophy" and "philosophical". It is scarcely to be wondered at that no attempt has been made to connect these, since to go to the length even of entertaining the possibility of connexion is to regard the two kinds of philosophy as commensurable — and this would be to debase philosophy, it would be felt. Serious philosophers certainly imply that there is no logical connexion : *i.e.* that the popular use of "philosophical" is due merely to a misunderstanding of the true nature of philosophy; and that this in its turn is due to lack of vision and training of the lay mind. There is some justification for this attitude; for popular expositions of philosophy that are popular enough to fulfil their function not only give but a poor insight into the nature of the subject but usually give a misleading account of the matter. Thus the two conceptions of philosophy diverge, and the simple, popular, untechnical kind of philosophy becomes an object of contempt to academic philosophers. But, if there is really a connexion between the two, as is indicated by the discussion of ambiguity in Chapter XI, we ought rather to look upon academic and popular philosophy as different in degree than in kind.

Except for a few quite arbitrarily defined scientific words, even technical words have *gradually* grown to have their technical meanings out of the common usage. This *gradual* process ensures a psychological connexion between the usage of a given word in the two senses. To put the matter more explicitly : in spite of the fact that sentences, on account of the ambiguity of words, have many meanings, it is reasonable to think that the use of one such sentence — no matter which fact it may be directly expressing on a given occasion — symptomatically expresses but *one* fact. I have claimed that the

primary function of language, even in comparatively civilised life, is to symptomatically-express emotional facts, and that on this account language has become misleading to logicians because it was not primarily designed to directly-express facts. In other words *ambiguity* as a blemish was not (and is not) important to the primary function of language; and since ambiguity is, as a rule, noticed only by the most expert logicians, and the plain man can use language quite well without heeding it, he is clearly able to achieve his purpose in spite of it — from which there is some justification for thinking that the use of a sentence involves one fact only, *i.e.* that the use of a sentence containing an ambiguous word symptomatically expresses but one fact.

By means of this general conception we are *prima facie* in a position to connect the use of a sentence containing a word in its academic sense in a logical way with the use of a sentence containing this word in its popular sense. The link here discussed may afford further reason for regarding a philosophy as a guide to the nature of the times in which that philosophy was created.

There is a cynicism that philosophers voice what everybody knows to be true in a language that no one understands; and, like all cartoons, this gives us a shrewd glimpse of a certain truth. It implies at least that philosophers effect something rather different from what they aim at. They aim at truth, but according to the cynicism succeed only in being pretentious. If, however, philosophy has an important connexion with the nature of the age in which it is written, the cynicism must evidently be rather one-sided. Now for a philosophy to be based on a background-presupposition that its author was unaware of would scarcely be important either for philosophy or for the community; in fact this would allot to phil-

osophy a more modest position than it is wont to claim, for the subject would be made dependent upon history for its proper comprehension. But there is no reason why the converse should not be true, so that we should from a study of a written philosophy infer to some extent the nature of its background-presupposition, and thus divine something of the nature of the age in which it was brought to birth. In that case, just as the poet inscribes in memorable lines the spirit of the age, so would the philosopher indirectly reflect in his philosophy the nature of his epoch. It is to be remarked that he can probably become aware of this background only if he becomes detached from it and no longer in unreflective harmony with it. Thus some contrast is needed before we can become conscious of the deeper governing influences of our time.

When to the business of philosophy is thus added this sociological or historical function, which is in no way incompatible with the conception of philosophy as unconscious autobiography, then, consistently with this conception, the feature of being in the broad ordinary sense true is no longer required as the main end of philosophy. Hence both from the standpoint of Psychocentrics, according to which a philosophy bears a symptomatic relation to its author and not a relation of truth to the universe, and also from the standpoint under discussion in the present chapter, search after truth is no longer to be regarded as an integral part of the function of philosophy. *Philosophy is either autobiographical or indirectly reflective of the background-presupposition of the community : with directly expressed truth it has nothing to do.*

The tentative suggestion may be made that this reflective power of philosophy throws some light on the fascination that attaches to the writings of the great philosophers. NonSense these may have been — that counts but little — but as clues to the workings of original minds and, we add, to the nature

of past time, they have an undeniable lure. Moreover the genius, who, as is commonly said, is "ahead of his time", could probably not attain his advanced outlook unless he were more than other people in touch with the nature of his own time. But it would appear therefore that an outstanding man, while he reflects his own age, is also to some extent out of harmony with it, not because he is eccentric but because he has advanced beyond it. To this extent it becomes necessary to revise our conception by saying that the philosopher partially indirectly reflects the background-presupposition of his own time and partially that of the time to come. The outstanding mirror the future in so far as they mould it. Perhaps this will explain the difficulty widely experienced of understanding the great philosophers. There arises a vast body of interpreters, who try to explain the new in terms of old moulds, and who thus weaken the new until it is — however misleadingly — intelligible. Such presentations remind one of the old doctrine of Emanation, where the glory of the original becomes dimmed by a series of emanations until it arrives at last at a mundane form.

It may be of interest to make an academic application of our hypothesis, to throw light on one of Hegel's rather enigmatic dicta. We recall that Hegel regarded his several categories as summarising in an important way the philosophies that preceded his own. The function of these summarising concepts was to reveal at once the Truth and Falsity of the philosophies for which they stood. The philosophies were True in so far as the corresponding categories could be merged in the Absolute Idea; they were False in so far as they fell short of this . But they pervaded the entire philosophy, for the various features of a philosophy were supposed to exhibit aspects of its category. We may now ask if there is any difference bet-

ween these "dominant concepts" that summarise philosophies in Hegel's way and the background-presuppositions that form the historical and environmental settings that mould the growth of philosophies. Clearly to the extent to which a system is a child of its time, the same dominant concept must be an integral component of both. There is surely no reason why a dominant concept should not animate an epoch as well as a philosophy. If so, we may say that the History of Philosophy consists of dominant concepts of historical philosophies and perhaps their development, and that the Philosophy of History consists of the results of distilling from history the dominant concepts of epochs, so that it will have a meaning to assert that the History of Philosophy is identical with the Philosophy of History. Though it is not to be claimed that either Hegel or Croce meant this, yet the interpretation might without injustice be attached to Hegel.

This historical significance of philosophy is in harmony with the not-uncommon opinion that the greatness of a philosophy is independent of its truth: certain speculative thinkers, such as Hegel, even went so far as to despise the truth in the sense of correctness, accuracy, or what is the case. Certainly a good deal of explanation is needed to reconcile the greatness of many philosophers with their singular lack of contribution to knowledge and their mutual disagreement. But a certain value must be allowed to the work of philosophers if they really achieved sufficient independence of mind to give voice to the nature of a future age. How far they have achieved this and how far they have effected the community in general is a task for the philosophical historian to estimate. On the whole it would seem that all philosophers have had a certain independence of mind, but that this has nearly always been restricted within too narrow and unscientific a framework.

A very few philosophers, such as Heraclitus and Nietzsche, have dedicated their lives to exposing myth,* and they show a penetration seldom paralleled by philosophers that are more renowned in academic circles.

(*) "Myth" is not of course here used in its anthropological sense.

CHAPTER XIV

Conclusion.

Philosophy is a shadow on the wall. This is so in a double sense, *i.e.* the shadow has two aspects, though this book is devoted, with the exception of a single chapter, to only one of them.

To call philosophy a shadow may not be a compliment : for shadows are nebulous — scarcely important to any of us, at first sight — yet shadows can be arranged so as to assume pleasing forms or to become the outward sign of fond illusion. For those to whom for some unconscious reason or other a knowledge of reality is barred life is a game with shadows.

I have here not merely suggested an analogy between philosophy and shadows, but have identified the two; even as an analogy, however, the matter may be pursued further. A shadow cannot be present unless there is something eclipsed and something eclipsing. The obstructing object may be something material, such as a man's body, or it may be translucent, as a cinematograph film; here it is immaterial, part of a man's mind. But it is not with these so much as with the repressed source of illumination that this book is concerned.

Philosophers do not seem to have perceived that their subject is made up of such elements. They supposed philosophy to be a dyadic or two-termed relation between themselves and the object studied; whereas it is a tetradic or four-termed relation between themselves as opaque or translucent eclipsing objects, the source of illumination, which consists of their unconscious energy and desires, the wall of reality on which the shadows become visible, and fourthly the shadows them-

selves — they have mistaken the shadows for the wall, not realising that the shadows were of their own making. A clearer standpoint reveals the shadows as quite distinct from the wall; and enquiries naturally open up as to the source of illumination and the kinds of shadows to which the illumination may give rise. We see, then, that, the proper object of philosophy is not the study of reality nor true propositions about the wall. What the proper object of philosophy may be — if there is any — can be determined only after an exhaustive examination of the shadows as an important element in a four-termed relation; for the four elements, the wall is known for what it is to all that are not obsessed by shadows, and the eclipsing factor is also known to some extent wherever there is a conception of morality and conscience, but the shadows have never been recognised for what they are, not till lately have the nature and power of the illumination been realised.

Now the shadow which is philosophy is a shadow with two sources of illumination. In one case it is due to the "spirit of the times" which manifests itself through individuals. It is the function of philosophy thus to be an inscription of this spirit, and to this a final chapter is devoted. But it is with the more fundamental source of the shadow that I would concern myself—that is, the philosopher's own unconscious character. It is this and its frustrations that shine so potently through the film of man's consciousness, and throw into strong relief its own symptomatic expressions of fears and wishes. Usually the film is coloured and the lens of the projector distorts like those of a fun fair — the shadow scarcely gives a hint of the source from which it springs and to which it corresponds. The two are related in a way so important that it cannot be overstressed, but the relation is very complicated. Let us say that the shadow *symptomatically expresses* its source.

If the shadow happened to correspond to the formation

of the wall, then the philosophy would in some ordinary sense be true. Whether this should happen or not is here unimportant, for in one way or other it does not concern the essential nature of philosophy; but if this should happen, the philosophy might be said *to directly-express* a fact. It is with facts symptomatically expressed that I assert philosophers were really concerned: this is the standpoint of Psychocentrics.

If we think of the more conscious side of the philosopher's mind as the lens of a camera, and if we leave the lens open so that the light from the source of illumination always shines on the roller-blind-shutter which covers the plate of our focal plane camera, then the philosopher is occupied, so he thinks, with the shadow on the shutter, for he believes it to be the photograph on the plate. Yet as the camera moves about, and the shadow on the blind alters, how many of its forms correspond to the reality on the plate ? It will be relatively seldom that the roller-blind will be released and allow a photograph to become imprinted as a reality. So often only will philosophy directly express fact or be true — but it always, then and at other times, symptomatically expresses its source.

No longer, then, can the charge be brought against philosophers that they disagree. No longer is it their function to find truth — or to agree. Nor has philosophy been abysmally slow to discover the secret of the universe, for with such things philosophy has nothing to do. Nor has it shown itself a poor science, for, not being concerned with directly expressed fact, it is not a science at all.

From a consideration of speculative philosophy, whether 2,500 years of it or merely the 300 years since Descartes's time, emerge undeniable and perhaps disappointing facts. Not even one philosophical truth has become generally accepted; in spite of the many attempts to sift the true from the alse in various

systems, all efforts have proved fruitless. In this connexion what has been said of Hegel is likely to·hold of all speculation. "It is impossible to say to what extent this proposition coincides, or does not coincide, with his opinions; for whatever truth there may be in Hegel, it is certain that his meaning cannot be wrung from him by any amount of mere reading, any more than the whiskey which is in bread . . . can be extracted by squeezing the loaf into a tumbler. He requires to be *distilled*, as all philosophers do more or less — but Hegel to an extent which is unparalleled." [1]   That is to say a much less intellectual effort would be required to find the truth for oneself than to understand *his* exposition of it.

But the failure of philosophy is deeper than this. The instrument of speculation is Reason, and what we find is — so many *original* speculative philosophers, so many *different* speculations. These systems are neither the same nor compatible, except on a basis of some further speculation. Thus Reason tells us different tales : we have no criterion for deciding between its products, nor have we a way of testing any single one of them. The speculative criterion no doubt was that a system must conform to the test of rationality or Reason; but then every system succeeds in this because its version of Reason is one always adjusted to its own requirements. *We have discovered nothing from speculative philosophy.*

Many periods of the past have bequeathed to us a rich legacy of speculative philosophy. This form of thought has, temporarily at any rate, checked its course, for in the present century there has grown up a new approach in matters of this kind : logical analysis. This is part of the fruit of Formal Logic, which for over two thousand years has been almost lifeless.

---

(2)   J. F. Ferrier, *Institutes of Metaphysics*, Edinburgh and London, 1854, pp. 91-2.

One of its chief aims is the annihilation of speculation as an objective system of Truth. Since, in a general way it succeeds in this, we are confronted with the need to understand traditional philosophy afresh. "Unfortunately there is a snag in this simple scheme. It forgets the old precept, 'Don't throw out your dirty water until you get in your clean'."[1]

But to this the logical analyst will reply : this "is the very devil unless completed by 'This also I say unto you, that when you get your fresh water you must throw out the dirty, and be particularly careful not to let the two get mixed'. Now this is just what we never do. We persist in pouring the clean water into the dirty; and our minds are always muddled in consequence. The educated human of to-day has a mind which can be compared only to a store in which the very latest and most precious acquisitions are flung on top of a noisome heap of rag-bottle refuse and worthless antiquities from the museum lumber room." The new wine of logico-analytical thought will not taste well if poured on top of speculative dregs.

We may apply the methods of logical analysis towards clarifying speculative philosophy, in the hope of disentangling incompatibilities. Several things can happen : (a) an intelligible translation on the obscure is effected, but it is self-evident and trivial or else clearly false; (b) it is not self-evident nor trivial, but does not really represent the philosopher whose work is being analysed; (c) it is not known whether or not the translation is fair to the philosopher; (d) we may not have the remotest idea how to effect a translation; or (e) logical analysis may dismiss speculation as unverifiable. Be this as it may,

---

(1)   Bernard Shaw, *The Adventures of the Black Girl in her Search for God*, London, 1932, p. 60.

logical analysts have not claimed to discover in this way a result that is clear, true, non-trivial, and true to its original. In any event logical analysis maintains that in a strict sense speculation is NonSense.

This conclusion may be cogent without being convincing. Having succeeded, logical analysis has now few tasks with which it can occupy itself. Though it contains the elements of a unique and powerful weapon of clarification, it easily becomes psychologically narrow, merely destructive, and blind to the standpoint of what it attacks, so that it, too, like speculation, fails to have any objective purpose. In consequence the whole of philosophy, speculative and analytical, requires to be interpreted anew. Further, what logical analysis demonstrates of speculation (NonSense) is something the speculative philosopher would have claimed all along (under another name, such as transcendent or TransSense). But let us look at the matter more from the point of view of the speculative philosopher.

(*a*) If he presents the logical analyst with a thesis, only to be shown that his important propositions — even his very questions — make no sense, he still feels impelled to keep on asking his questions — there is *something* he had not had answered. Thus the logico-analytical way of dealing with speculation is very like the Kantian : the categories may not be applied to noumena; antinomies arise from doing so without realising it, when this is pointed out we see there never was a problem; and yet, as Kant admits, we still think of the situation as a problem. No matter how thoroughly you slay the hero of Valhalla, he is like a cat with nine lives that mesmerises you so that you cannot count up beyond eight.

(*b*) Speculative philosophy is very interesting. It can retain its interest even for a reader convinced that it is NonSense. Indeed nonsense (of which NonSense is a species) as

modern psychology shows, is, on occasion, of deep personal concern.

(c) Speculative philosophers discussed their problems with one another, disagreed with some and agreed with others; they nodded their heads, displayed enlightenment, and looked confused. They were capable of understanding, in some sense, *something* when they discussed speculative questions.

Yet logical analysis makes it abundantly clear that no true proposition in any ordinary sense may be hoped for : in other words speculation did not directly express facts — there was no correspondence between the shadows on the wall and the form of the wall itself. Thus in saying the universe was an interrelated whole they did not in the least express this fact, namely that the universe is an interrelated whole, but on the contrary, *symptomatically* expressed their buoyancy at, say, not being completely cut off from their favourite dog that had just met with an unhappy end. This very crude example may show how I wish to alter the focus of attention from the wall, on which the shadows show, to the illumination, the unconscious source of wishes.

We see, therefore, that another conception of speculative philosophy is available. The revision of standpoint involved means that the conclusions that speculation is useless and Non-Sense are not so disappointing as they may have seemed, for there is no longer any need to suppose that it was the business of speculative philosophy to discover truth or to directly-express fact. Accordingly it is of no account that speculation gives incompatible judgments about the universe — this is a matter for regret only when the subject is judged by an *irrelevant criterion*. Similarly, since the direct expressing of fact is not the function of speculation, it is irrelevant to judge its assertions to be NonSense. NonSense they are, but only when speculation is credited with an aim

foreign to its nature . *It is possible to understand speculative philo sophy, even though it is NonSense, and we are asking something, even when asking a NonSense-question.*

Since logical analysis arose as a method of shaking the foundations of speculation, to show that it was not in a common or garden sense true or false, *i.e.* to show that it was Non-Sense, it follows that logical analysis had no positive aim in view. Now if it is true that it is not the function of of speculation to be true or false or to directly-express fact, logical analysis has evidently been attributing to it a character quite foreign to its nature; and, whether speculation can or cannot be understood independently, the sole logical effect of analysis has been to demonstrate a proposition that has no bearing on anything. Nevertheless the practical effect is to remind us of something we knew all along — that speculation was concerned with matters beyond the range of ordinary meaning. And if we have been inclined to forget what the celebrated philosophers always implied, it is important that logical analysis should have restored our sense of perspective.

By its failure to give logical demonstration of anything, logical analysis shows itself irrelevant to the task of evaluating philosophy though it reminds us indirectly of the nature of speculation.

To put the matter cryptically : logical analysis is not (subject to qualification) philosophy because it is *logic;* and speculative philosophy is not philosophy because it is *autobiography.* It is here maintained that traditional academic philosophy has significance only when interpreted in terms of its authors, that its reference is personal and unconscious.

Philosophy began with wonder, says Aristotle — but it might be better to ask what made man wonder. If he suffered no frustrations, no doubts, what could set him meditating ?

Given a dim knowledge, however, that all was not well in his world, that he feared he might not be able to act as he would wish, then he might *wonder* why.

A doubt draws attention to itself; to dwell on the doubt is to wonder. More than likely a dimly realised doubt would be so vaguely defined that a man could not tell what he doubted. In proportion as the doubt is not clear, the thought about the doubt is cloaked in symbols : the greater the doubt the more alternative thoughts are possible, the further from the truth are they and the more deeply symbolised do they become.

The rules of correlating a real unconscious doubt and its symbolic conscious expression are very complicated. This much, however, we can say, that very likely an unconscious doubt of x * is symptomatically expressed by a conscious doubt of φ *. Now the more x is repressed from consciousness, the more impossible will it be to diagnose x. Accordingly every proposition one can think of that might settle the doubt of φ one way or another, is doomed to failure at the outset, by the unconscious process which keeps x unconscious. In philosophy, the more inaccessible x is, the greater is the number of theories concerning φ . The pursuit of the doubt must ever make itself felt, and hence continues the craving to speculate, but all such speculation is really about x and not about φ, for it is a desire to find what φ symbolises. It has, however, no deep concern with the world of objects of which x is one. The matter of moment is the personal psychological world which embraces x.

In this way speculative thought, apparently about the world of ψ's present to consciousness, is really about the world of x's present to the unconscious. The world of φ 's is not a mere

(*) *x* and φ have been selected because x suggests on "unknown quantity" and φ the first letter of "phenomenon".

group of this, that, and the other, but a *world* that is a wish-picture or a fear-picture or a doubt-picture doing conscious duty for the world of x's : this is what is intended by Psychological Solipsism. Unconsciously all our interests refer to ourselves, everybody in a philosopher's world is himself ; the only inhabitant of his world—and if there were any other worlds they would exist only in so far as they have a place in his *i.e.* have some significance for him — his view of it may be called Solipsism. Since he does not deny the existence of other people, mere physical existence, yet they are people to him only if they have a place in his world, and so this Solipsism is psychological. Then people exist, in the way understood by the ordinary realist logician, in proportion as his world tends to become equal in extent to the whole universe.

Speculative philosophy is a painting of such a world — an outward manifestation of an unconscious world. The task of Psychocentrics is to reveal this unconscious world — to translate the pondering about the ϕ 's into a pondering about the x's. The task of Psychocentrics is to shift the focus of speculation from externality in order to find out what the author of the speculation was saying about himself, and to understand moreover precisely why his unconscious chose the special mode of speculation which in any given case it did chose. This process is, of course, applicable to all human activity; indeed the psycho-analysis of human behaviour is largely Psychocentrics. When philosophy is specially concerned, it may be call "Philosophical Psychocentrics".

. In the sphere of ethics the same psychological motives show themselves at work. Ethics began with the Greeks as a wondering if this or that was the better kind of life to lead. Ethics is rightly said to deal with conduct, and modern ethics would seem to be merely evading the issue in giving abstract definitions unrelated to definite kinds of action. The Greeks better

understood the nature of this subject, no doubt because repression had not in general reached so severe a stage as it has now. Sometimes, at least, their speculative philosophy was designed to furnish a basis for ethics — ethics was the goal towards which all their speculation contained a bias.

Here too, as in the case of speculative wondering, philosophy ends in Psychocentrics. The question has just been raised : what was the object of wonder ? The answer is that it is clearly the same as the cause. Man's unconscious frustration, because unconscious, caused him to wonder; and he wondered at a symbol of it and hence at itself.—*The unconscious is a prime example of a teleological and efficient cause wrapped in one.*

The conception of Psychological Solipsism — especially when the truth of it is verified by carrying out the psychocentric detail — explains one or two facts not usually taken account of. But secondly we see why speculative philosophy can appeal to so many, although it is NonSense; for the world of a great mind is always a matter of interest — indeed there are few who are quite untouched by the autobiographies of the great. And in the same way we see how it makes sense to say we understand the NonSense that is speculative philosophy — we have an unconscious knowledge of what it is of which the conscious world depicted by the philosophy is a symptom — we know unconsciously what is the great doubt underlying the philosophic form of its outward projection.

Regarding the three conceptions of speculation, logical analysis, and psychocentrics, a distinction of function must be drawn. It is the function of speculation to speculate or produce speculative philosophy; it is that of logical analysis to analyse; but it is *not* the function of psychocentrics to produce psychocentric philosophy *as a species of philosophy,* though

it certainly aims at producing psychocentric interpretations and translations of philosophy : the result, however, is not properly to be called philosophical, but scientific, and scientific with an anthropological character. That is to say, by means of our knowledge of the unconscious we hope to examine one special form, namely, the philosophical, of the way in which man reacts to his environment. We are just as much entitled to study from this angle the phenomenon of philosophy as to study the phenomena of social customs or myths. *Psychocentrics is thus the use of psycho-analysis in the anthropological study of philosophy.* But so far as a certain philosophical outlook is implied by a science, this might he described as psychocentric naturalism. If I may be permitted to summarise this book in a slightly cryptic way : it is an essay in the rise of the spirit of Rationalism in philosophy and the decay of the spirit of Pure Reason.

Philosophy is regarded as one of the many manifestations of man's intellectual endeavour; but it would seem to differ from most others in that they deal with reality while it does not. Philosophy seems to oppose reality, and then form a substitute for it by constructing for its own operations "a world of thought". We find evidence for this when science progresses by overcoming absolutes while philosophy "progresses" by forming them.

Is there, then, any philosophy left that could be in any way objective ?

So far as a man's philosophy, in the sense here described, is a product of reality *as it is* and not of unconscious phantasies of what he would wish the world to be, the concepts upon which it rests would have their basis in reality or sense-experience, and thus be non-speculative. Academic discussion, logical theses, and critical arguments would not, however, easily arise, for they would have no point; indeed they could

arise only if some thinker were to view these reality-concepts through speculative eyes or to systematise them in opposition to speculation. Hence philosophy in this sense would not be an explicitly logical corpus. It would, however, manifest *reflective insight* into human situations and affairs. Thus philosophy, while non-scientific in the sense of being non-experimental, would contribute to life by insight into an important part of reality, whereas metaphysics would be fundamentally opposed to reality. It would seem that philosophers have ever set out to answer questions of personal concern in life, and, when they failed, metaphysics as a contra-reality or substitute for life arose. Thus the metaphysician was a would-be psychologist, and so perhaps his function may gradually be taken over by the psychologist, who would differ from him mainly in being what Nietzsche would call a yea-sayer to life — academic philosophy, which expresses a "down-going" of life, would give place to intuitive psychology.

There would seem to be another feature of philosophy, or rather of the philosophical frame of mind, which is rarely touched upon. It may be described vaguely as breadth of mind or a power to look at things as a whole — though not altogether in the Bradley-Bosanquet sense. However inadequate this is as a description, what is meant is a quality that is possessed by the greatest scientists, such as, to mention three from our own time, Freud (psycho-analysis), Einstein (relativity-physics), and Russell (mathematical logic); it seems to consist in a kind of daring imagination. It is poles apart from scientific departmentalism, which will not look for the solution to a problem outside the boundaries of what is labelled a particular science. Creative scientists — those that make new discoveries of a fundamental kind — seem in this respect to be nearer to the philosophical mentality than to their colleagues that elaborate the details of discoveries al-

ready made. Whether it is correct to call this quality "philosophical" is a question that must wait till we know more about the psychology of scientific advance. Even then the use of the word one way or the other would be of little importance unless, for instance, the quality could be stimulated by the study of philosophical classics. And no special body of knowledge would accrue; all that would be manifested would be a single-minded urge to get by any means to the bottom of things.

INDEX